THE SOLUTION OF THE CHILD LABOR PROBLEM

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FOREWORD

So long as there are immature human beings struggling in the industrial arena, there will be a Child Labor Problem.

The existence of the problem is scarcely questioned,—its causes and the proper remedies for it are alone in doubt.

The writer acted for two years as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Child Labor Committee, and during that time strove earnestly for prohibitory legislation. Subsequent consideration has led to a material change of attitude, which this paper is written to present.

The Child Labor Problem will never be satisfactorily solved by excluding children from the factory, because the two primary forces which are sending children to work,—family necessity and an uncongenial school

system,—are in no measure altered by such an exclusion.

The axe must be laid at the root of the tree. Child Labor must be eliminated by eliminating the causes which send children to work.

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UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,
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CHAPTER I

THE CHILD LABOR PROBLEM[1]

I. *What is the Child Labor Problem?*

THE child labor problem is generally looked upon as a fourteen-year problem. The dividing line between the land of schooling and the land of work has been set at fourteen, hence the child of thirteen and eleven months has been rigidly excluded from the factory, while to the child of fourteen and one day, the factory doors have opened wide. The fourteen-year limit has been recognized and accepted by the state legislatures, and everywhere laws exist which on the one hand prohibit the child under fourteen from working, and, on the other hand, require attendance at school up to the age of fourteen. By common consent, expressed through widely adopted legislation, fourteen has been

[1] Republished by permission of *Educational Foundations.*

made the open sesame to the industrial world.

Practically all of the states place the minimum limit at fourteen, for one or more of the employments which children enter,—factory, mine, store, messenger service. In nearly all of these cases, however, the period from fourteen to sixteen is surrounded by certain restrictions, such as a prohibition of night work, of work for more than fifty-five hours a week, of work in dangerous trades, and the like. The fourteen-year minimum is, however, a generally accepted standard, and it is on that standard that the campaign for the passage and enforcement of legislation is being waged.

The age of fourteen has been made a fetish, and it is held constantly in the public eye.

The period of legislative protection is being extended, in a few cases, from fourteen to eighteen. Laws have been passed in eleven states which prohibit employment under eighteen in specific industries, at night, and for more than a stated number of hours per

week.[1] The eighteen-year statutes, however, represent the exception. The fourteen-sixteen-year standard is the one generally adopted. Even the laws providing eighteen as a maximum limit of protection, set fourteen as the minimum. "Could the fourteen-year limit be enforced, the child labor problem would be solved," thinks the man on the street. Should this attitude become general, a point will eventually be reached at which fourteen will be regarded as the "right age." The public will believe implicitly that child labor under the standard age limit of fourteen is "wrong"; while child labor over that age is "right." The basis for the popular impression has already been established by making compulsory education laws, and laws prohibiting child labor, revolve about fourteen as planets revolve about the sun. Already the age is generally accepted; a continuation of the present policy will lead to its being reverenced; and any attempt to break away from this fetish will meet with

[1] *Handbook of Child Labor Legislation*, 1909. National Consumers' League, 105 E. 22d St., New York City.

as many obstacles as are encountered in an attempt to persuade savages to cease from worshiping their Sun God.

II. *Maturity and not Age the Real Test*

What is the purpose in setting an age limit for child labor and why was that limit set at fourteen?

An age limit seems necessary in child labor legislation, although it is extremely unsatisfactory. The real test of preparedness to work is not age but maturity. It must be perfectly evident, to even the casual thinker, that the years fourteen-sixteen have no relation to maturity, and therefore have no rational basis for their existence. They coincide but roughly with the period of puberty in children, and with nothing in the law. At fourteen the body is still so plastic that it may be injured temporarily or permanently by work. Fourteen does not in any way coincide with maturity, yet the constantly dropping water of agitation has worn away the stone of indifference and—" children under fourteen should not work "—represents pub-

lic sentiment. Should this attitude persist, a point will eventually be reached where the indifference to all child labor legislation, so prevalent in the past, will have been replaced by a stratum of prejudice in favor of fourteen, harder to penetrate than the original indifference.

A dozen years ago, such child labor laws as were in existence, were based on a twelve-year minimum. Twenty-five years before that, children of ten might legally go to work. As wealth increased and the necessity for the work of the child diminished, the standard has been gradually pushed upward, until in 1910 it has reached fourteen. Is there any reason to believe that by 1930 it should not in the normal condition of social legislation have risen to sixteen or seventeen or even eighteen?

An eighteen- or nineteen-year minimum, with protection to twenty-one, would be far more rational than the present fourteen-year minimum with protection to sixteen. At eighteen or nineteen the body is usually mature, while twenty-one is the legal limit of maturity. If this standard were adopted,

the state would forbid work until physical maturity, eighteen or nineteen, and protect the worker until legal manhood, twenty-one. The age of twenty-one is at best an arbitrary one, but its adoption as the upper limit of child labor legislation would have the advantage of making coincident the age of legal majority and the age of legislative protection.

"But," exclaims the man on the street, "you couldn't adopt such a standard now, it would throw millions out of work into hoboing, prostitution, and starvation. And think of the widowed mothers, dependent on their children for support. You couldn't enforce such a law."

Certainly not. So long as the man on the street believes that such a law cannot be enforced, it is unenforceable. Legislation which affects the real or imagined interests of capital requires a strong public opinion to pass and enforce it. What, then, is the advantage of the discussion? Merely this. A child labor standard of eighteen-twenty-one does not appear to us nearly so extreme as a

standard of fourteen-sixteen appeared to the man on the street in the United States in 1850, or in England in 1800.

The whole thought of the early nineteenth century was opposed to any form of industrial regulation, and when it was proposed to correct unspeakable child labor abuses, through legislation, a howl of protest was raised. After a long struggle, the first English Child Labor Law was passed in 1802. Although it related to apprentices only, regulating their work up to the age of twelve, in an inadequate and insufficient manner, it was looked upon as the first step toward socialism and chaos.

With the development of modern productive machinery, the nation piles up year by year a greater and greater mass of wealth in the form of a social surplus. As this surplus grows, the community is better prepared to keep its children away from monotonous toil until they are so mature that the development of their bodies and minds will not be seriously impaired by it.

The existence of a social surplus makes

possible a long, well-rounded childhood. The increase of the social surplus makes possible a gradual extension of the period of childhood, and a fuller development of its possibilities. Why should these children work? We are already creating enough wealth for all. A point in the development of the social surplus has been reached which would amply justify the raising of the child labor age at least one and perhaps two years. Every effort should therefore be made to prevent further emphasis on the fourteen-sixteen year standard.

The age test is, however, at best unsatisfactory. As previously indicated, the child labor problem is a problem of maturity and not of age. Stanislaus Mattevitcz may say in response to a question, "Yes, me fourteen," and he may prove his age by producing his passport or his immigration record, but has he proven his fitness to work? By no means: He has not proven that his body is mature, or that his mind will not be atrophied by five years of intimate contact with hides in a leather factory.

On the other hand, suppose that a competent expert has examined his bone and muscle structure, ascertained his weight and height, and tested his mental development. These things are definite and indisputable, and prove what the "me fourteen" argument can never prove; mature preparedness for work.

No age limit can be fixed which will apply fairly or even adequately in a cosmopolitan country like the United States. Some races mature earlier than others, and in every race, individuals differ in their point of maturity. Some children of sixteen are as well prepared for work as other children of twenty. The real criterion is not, therefore, "How old are you?" but "Are you mature?" Unfortunately scientists have never come to an agreement as to an effective test of maturity. Weight and height are some index; the hardness of certain bones is another index; and the growth of hair on the face and body is still another. As to which one, or which combination of these indices, should be accepted as a rational basis for judging of the matu-

rity of a person, there is no general conclusion.

Irrespective of the method of applying it, the true ultimate test of fitness to work will be maturity, and all immature children will be excluded from the factory, not because their birthday record does not show high enough, but because either in mind, in body, or in both, they are immature.

The standard previously suggested of an eighteen-year minimum with protection to twenty-one would be prima facie evidence of maturity, but it would be by no means final. The ultimate test must inevitably be physical and mental capacity to withstand the deadening influence of monotonous factory toil.

III. *Aspects of the Problem*

There is a child labor problem and it is not, as generally supposed, merely a problem of the child. It is a problem of many aspects, phases, and viewpoints, which can best be emphasized by a few illustrations picked up in the world of working children.

One bitter morning in March the snow

whirled around the corner of a silk-mill. In the lee of the corner, with her thin shawl wrapped about her head and shoulders, stood a child who looked scarce thirteen. Her face was weary, though she had just hurried from bed into her clothes, and, after gulping down her breakfast, had run to the mill, "So's not to get docked for being late." But the night shift was slow in "getting up its ends." Half-past six came, but the spindles still whizzed on. Meanwhile the damp snow played havoc with the broken shoes.

"How old are you?"

"Fourteen."

"Fourteen? You look awfully small for fourteen. How long have you worked in this mill?"

"Three years and a half."

"Well, how old were you when you started?"

"Thirteen."

When this girl began work the legal limit was thirteen; meanwhile the legislature had raised it to fourteen; but the child's knowledge of mathematics was not sufficient to

show her that thirteen plus three and one-half did not make fourteen.

At last the night shift "came off" and this frail bit of humanity, who had worked three and a half years between her thirteenth and fourteenth birthdays, walked stolidly into the mill to stand for eleven hours in front of a spinning-frame, listening to the whirring of the machinery and watching the gliding of the threads.

That side of the picture, the child's side, is the one most frequently emphasized, but there are other aspects of equal importance. A boy of eighteen had been working for seven years in a soft-coal mine.

"Yes, I can write,—only my name, though. Read? Sure; I read the paper most every day, but it's slow work."

"Didn't you go to school?"

"To school? Did I? Well, I guess I did. It was in one door and out of the other. How is a feller going to school if he starts at eleven in the mines?"

The school is also interested in child labor.

Then there is the manufacturer's side of

the child labor problem. On one mill hang two signboards,—

Small Girls Wanted *Small Boys Wanted*

For years the signs have hung there, until they are old and worn, and meanwhile the manufacturer has secured and is still securing the merchandise which he desires. Every morning the children come trooping along the road and into the mill. Many of them answer well to the description of the sign. They are "small." While this mill is the exception, and while few advertisements for "Small girls" are seen, yet the low standard set by the "small girl" manufacturer must, in the competitive struggle, be accepted by other manufacturers; hence the "small" ones secure employment everywhere.

So, from many sides, the child labor problem is a problem. It is a problem to the child who works; to the home which sends its children into the mills; to the schools which fail to educate the working children; to the manu-

facturer who wants "small girls and boys;" and to the society which demands and gets cheap goods.

IV. *The Extent of Child Labor*

It is of little interest and of no practical importance that the census of 1900 places the number of children between ten and fifteen engaged in gainful occupations at a million and three-quarters, while certain critics state that it should be two millions. If the census figures are accepted, seven-tenths of the child laborers were boys and three-tenths were girls. But these definite figures are, as such, matters of little importance, because if there were but a hundred thousand, or even a hundred children, whose lives were stunted and misshapen by premature work, the conditions would imperatively demand recognition and reform. The only facts worth remembering in this connection are that the child laborers are very numerous, and that about one-third of them are girls.

A discussion of the extent of child labor should include a distinction between the work

of children on the farm, in the home, and in the factory, mill, and mine. Three-fifths of all of the child laborers are engaged in agriculture, particularly in cotton-picking in the Southern States. As yet no attempt has been made to legislate against agricultural child labor. There has been considerable agitation regarding the child berry-pickers in the trucking states; and in some states, work in the canneries has been prohibited. Agricultural labor as such has not, however, been touched, first, because of the assumed educative value of the work; second, because the farmers hold the balance of power in many if not most legislatures; and third, because domestic service and agricultural labor are generally regarded as of private concern and not subject to legislation.

What are the relative merits of these arguments?

A child on the farm with his father or in the house with her mother will in a majority of cases receive an elementary training infinitely superior to the training afforded by any school. As the majority of children en-

gaged in farm labor and domestic service are still working with their parents, it is neither possible, nor is it immediately desirable, to legislate regarding them.

Domestic service and farm labor are, however, undergoing a process of evolution. It is one thing to work at odd jobs around the farm, under the direction of a father, and quite another to pick strawberries twelve or fourteen hours a day under the eye of a boss. One occupation is educative; the other is monotonous and as physically harmful (save for the fresh air) as any factory toil. It is one thing to help mother around the home, making beds, dusting, and the like; and quite another to slave, half-fed, in the kitchen of a boarding-house under the hawk-eye of its mistress.

In a recent address[1] Dr. Woods Hutchinson makes the statement that some forms of farm work are as badly in need of supervision as is the factory work,—a statement

[1] "Overworked Children." By Woods Hutchinson, M.D. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Conference of the National Child Labor Committee, January 1, 1909. P. 119.

which is greatly strengthened by a glance at the following quotation from Dr. Edward T. Devine:

"On Wednesday night of this week, I happened to sit at dinner by the side of a gentleman who lives in Brooklyn, and raises cotton in the Panhandle of Texas. . . . I asked him how early the children began to work, and he said without hesitation, 'at six and younger.' 'I recall,' he said, 'one boy of six who earned fifty cents a day the season through.' He had described the way the bag is slung about the neck and dragged on the ground behind so that the picker may use both hands.

"I inquired how big a boy had to be before he was strong enough to drag one of these bags, and he said, 'Well, you see we made the bag to fit the child.' I then inquired about the schools. . . . His answer was, 'It is a pretty rough country. School is kept during the months where there is nothing to do in the fields. . . . I admit,' said he, 'that is not ideal, but there is a saying down there that ignorance and cotton go together.'

"Finally, I asked him, 'And what is the effect of cotton picking throughout the season on the health and strength and growth of the children?' A thoughtful look came into his face (I honestly believe he had never thought about it before), and he said, 'Of course, it destroys their vitality.'" [1]

Thus far to a limited extent, but nevertheless surely, farm labor and domestic service are ceasing to have their old significant rela-

[1] "The New View of the Child." By Edward T. Devine, Ph.D. Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting, National Child Labor Committee, 1908. Pp. 4-5.

tion to home life. As they broaden out into the larger spheres of labor-employing agencies, they must and will eventually become the subjects of legislation aimed to correct any abuses which may exist in them.

In 1900, of the 1,750,178 working children between ten and fifteen,

60.7 % were in agriculture.
16.2 % were in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits.
15.9 % were in domestic service.
6.9 % were in trade and transportation.
0.2 % were in professional service.

Thus there is a wide variation in the percentages of children engaged in different occupations.

So, too, there is a variation from state to state. The Southern States lead in the total amount of child labor, but a large proportion of their children are engaged in cotton picking. On the other hand, in the great manufacturing states there is a smaller total of working children, but a larger proportion of

them are engaged in manufacturing.[1] With the exception of Pennsylvania, the Southern States have the greatest totals of child laborers, while the great manufacturing states have the largest number in manufacturing. As " Child Labor " usually refers to manufacturing rather than to agriculture, the real relation of the Northern States to the problem is apparent.

The official authority which comes into the most direct relation with the child labor problem is the Factory Inspection Department. In some of the more advanced states, the issuance of certificates has been placed in the hands of the school authorities, but even in such states, the factory departments have the largest measure of responsibility for enforcing the law. The statistics furnished by the factory departments are interesting, if not conclusive. The work of the factory inspectors is usually curtailed by lack of either inspectors or of office force, or of both. The resulting figures show, with some degree of accuracy, the changes from year to year in

[1] Census of Manufactures, 1900. Part ii, p. 987.

the amount of child labor, and they justify the statement that the problem is one of serious magnitude.

V. *The Child as a National Asset*

Into this problem, with its peculiar setting and its broad interests, enters the "Child Labor Reformer," the "Fanatic," the "Deluded Social Agitator," emphasizing the human side of industry and the statistical side of the child labor question, and clamoring for legislation and later for its enforcement. Is he justified in his demand?

The human appeal of the Reformer-Fanatic-Agitator is just and strong. Unquestionably the children are abused. Unquestionably they need protection. As has already been indicated, the statistical side of the problem is insignificant. What matter whether the true number of child workers be seventeen hundred thousand or twenty hundred thousand? Neither figure is within the bounds of definite comprehension and both are intolerable in their vastness. The child labor question is a question not of statistics,

but of children. So long as children are wrongfully at work, there will be need for child labor reform.

The reformer is often extreme; some of his statements are unwarrantable; and his figures are at times ridiculous. But one thing the reformer has done, and that one thing not only justifies his existence and activity, but makes of it a boon to his country,—the reformer has awakened the public conscience to a realization of the fact that the child is a national asset.

The child is a national asset, an asset of the first magnitude. Slowly the public mind is being awakened to the fact that whether the national ideal be the building of battleships, the painting of pictures, or the manufacturing of undershirts, the one really essential thing to the attainment of the ideal is a high type of citizenship. A condition precedent to high type citizenship is protected childhood.

Many problems have been discussed in recent years. There has been talk of temperance, of labor unions, of wages, of religion;

but no one has so direct a bearing on the future as the problem of child labor. The problem itself may not be so important, it may not bear on a large portion of the population, but the ultimate result of the agitation has been a widespread interest in children. The child labor problem is a type of the modern social problem, the agitation of which has led to a real interest in childhood, —hence, in the future.

CHAPTER II

CHILD LABOR AND THE CHILD[1]

I. *The Body and Work*

"OH, he's well grown, the work won't hurt him any," is an attitude very commonly taken by people who are interested in the continuance of the child labor system. But what does "well grown" mean? If it means "partly grown," the statement is correct. Children of fourteen are rapidly changing in body and mind. What shall be their environment and inspiration during this expanding period? enthusiasm, play, and life, or grind, monotony, and degeneration.

The bodies of children who go to work between the ages of fourteen and sixteen are still growing. Some measurements recently made of a number of Chicago children who applied for work certificates show that "The

[1] Republished by permission of *Education*.

boys of fifteen years receiving permission to work averaged nearly a foot taller, and about four pounds heavier than the boys of fourteen; and the girls of fifteen years averaged nearly one-half foot taller, and about fifteen pounds heavier than the girls whose ages averaged fourteen years."[1]

The statement that children develop physically between their thirteenth and their fifteenth birthdays seems almost obvious, and the figures are cited only to prove beyond cavil the existence of the development and to show its extent. It might be well to consider carefully, when a boy is sent into the factory, whether the wheels of progress will shape his growing body into a man or a machine. If the body develops in response to the factory environment it will be a machine.

In animals, we respect this period of growth. What farmer is there who would hitch a colt to the plow and compel it to work ten hours a day? "Assuredly not," you exclaim, "that would be such folly."

[1] "From School to Work in Chicago." By Anna E. Nichols. *Charities*, vol. xvi, p. 235.

And why? Simply because the body of the colt is still plastic and unformed; as yet it is not prepared to meet the physical strain involved in plowing. The farmer has learned this fact traditionally and perhaps by experience; but he has learned it, and he respects the period of growth because lack of respect for it will almost inevitably mean money loss.

Why is this discrimination made in favor of the colt?

The child of fourteen years is still developing, with a body plastic and unformed, like that of the colt. Yet such children are expected, as indicated by the laws of nine-tenths of the states, to work ten, eleven, and in some extreme cases, twelve hours a day in a factory, at tasks which prove as burdensome as is the galling plow collar to the colt.

Why such a contrast? Why such a sharp distinction between the treatment of a growing colt and of a growing child? Is the child better prepared to do the work? The figures just cited show that the body of the child of fourteen, like the body of the colt, is developing and rounding out, and that it is, there-

fore, as readily ruined in one case as in another. Why the contrast? It would seem that the money element is the chief consideration. In one respect the colt differs from the child,—it possesses cash value. It requires an outlay of money to replace a colt; a "wanted" sign will replace the child.

It is interesting to note that one never speaks of a "colt's work" as contrasted with a "horse's work," because the colt is not called upon to work at all. Its period of youth is left free for play and invigorating, out-door exercise. It has remained for human beings to divide up the work of the world among themselves,—to call a part of it "child's work," a part of it "woman's work," and a part of it "man's work."

II. *Play*

The growing child is not prepared to go into modern, subdivided industry and take up a task that involves a monotonous daily grind, for he is physically and mentally incapable of withstanding the pressure of such labor. His natural instinct leads toward play, and

if he is prohibited from playing, he has lost a part of his life which he can never replace.

During early youth, when the body is developing and plastic, there are two forces constantly at work, the one calling the child to higher ideals of life and growth, and the other tending to brutalize him for the sake of the few dollars which his unformed hands will earn. All of the future is conditioned on that struggle; if the forces of the ideal conquer, the child will develop through normal channels into a fully rounded man; if the forces of the dollar win, the child life is set and hardened into a money-making machine, grinding for a space and then giving place to another machine which has not yet been subject to the wear and tear of the life struggle.

Long youth means long life.

Slowly this truth is penetrating the public mind. After years of experiment and hesitating speculation, the nation is realizing that the child who goes into life without having learned to play, has taken the shortest road to the almshouse or the penitentiary; if

he does not reach his destination, society is not responsible, for it presented him with a first-class passage to one of these institutions when it robbed him of his childhood.

Mr. Nibecker, Superintendent of the Glen Mills (Pa.) House of Refuge, was asked, "What proportion of your boys were school boys, and what proportion were working boys at the time of their arrest?" His answer was, "I can give no proportion for the reason that the school boy is such a rare exception with us. I can say out of our experience here that the lines of commitment and lack of schooling run parallel. We have very few, if any, boys who were not working boys at the time of their arrest or just previous to their arrest."[1]

"Lines of commitment and lack of schooling run parallel." This "lack of schooling" means lack of the chance to be young. Truly, placing an undeveloped child at work in the world of modern industry, is fraught with grave consequences. With these boys

[1] *The Cost of Child Labor:* a pamphlet issued by the Pennsylvania Child Labor Committee. P. 22.

in the House of Refuge a shortening of the period of youth meant a shortening of the work period:—child workers turn easily into child criminals.

"Civilization is the result of man's having been young; play has laid the foundation of culture by organizing his instincts and busying them in ways that tell for the future of the man. Play extends its influences over everything in childhood, and for the child everything can be made the subject of play." [1]

If it be true that long youth means a high development, and that any shortening in youth means a proportionally shortened period of usefulness of the individual, it might be worth while to cast about for some means to preserve that youth to the necessary extent. Such a means can be found in play;—the chief guardian of youth. "The animal or child does not play because he is young, but has a period of youth because he must play . . . the very existence of youth is due to the necessity for play." [1]

Through expression, the body of the grow-

[1] *The Child.* By A. F. Chamberlain. London: Scott, 1901. P. 443.

ing child is developed most surely and most completely. The originalities of a child "arise through his action, struggle, trial of things for himself, and in an imitative way."[1]

The child of twelve or fourteen who stands at a machine, tying threads for eleven hours a day, is not growing through expression, but is being narrowed by an unvarying, monotonous impression. Slowly but surely he takes the shape into which this impression is forcing him, until he has become "A spinner at $6 a week." As the machine before him is a machine at $500, so he is a "mill-hand at $6." If the expert workman is to have a quick eye, a firm step, and a steady hand to do the work of the world, he must play in youth.

"As play is the most expressive form of action, so it gives a growth, both in power to do and power to appreciate, that does not come in equal measure from work."[2] An ef-

[1] *Social and Ethical Interpretations.* By J. M. Baldwin. New York: Macmillan Co., 1897. P. 99.

[2] *Moral Education.* By E. H. Griggs. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1904. P. 76.

ficient, strong, noble citizenship can be developed only by building upon childhood. Play is a part of childhood, and only upon a foundation of play and childhood can such a superstructure be erected.

To grow in mind, the child must play. He must construct and evolve; at first houses of blocks; then whistles; then games; then school problems; and finally engines, and books, and theories, and truths. The child who sits for eleven hours a day and guides a piece of cloth as it rushes past him on the machine, neither constructs nor evolves; his mind sleeps—and too often it is the sleep of intellectual death.

Play is the first step in the constructive work of a man's life. "Education, perhaps, should really begin with directing childish sports aright. Fröbel thought it the purest and most spiritual activity of childhood, the germinal leaves of all later life. Schooling that lacks recreation favors dullness, for play makes the mind alert and its joy helps all anabolic activities. . . . Johnson adds that it is doubtful if a great man ever accomplished

his life work without having reached a play interest in it.'' [1]

At an early period in life the child is not prepared to take a place in the great work of affairs and when called upon to do so, it is overwhelmed just as a day laborer would be if called upon to take charge of the New York Central Railroad. The task would be one outside of the scope of his development. So to the child, thrust out early into the rush and clamor of the market-place, the task is overwhelming. The child in monotonous, subdivided industry is out of its natural environment, and it gasps for its native air of play as a fish on the sand gasps for water.

III. *The Intellect and Work*

" A strong mind in a strong body " goes the old saying. How detrimental to the development of a strong body child labor may be, has already been indicated. That child labor may stunt physical development cannot be questioned,—having wrought havoc in

[1] *Adolescence.* By G. Stanley Hall. New York: Appleton, 1904. Vol. i, pp. 231-232.

the body, how easy it is to wreck the mind! "The greatest evil of child labor outside of the physical effects, is the mental and moral loss suffered in the deprivation of an education and the substitution of a daily round of monotonous labor, which is mere profitless drudgery so far as preparation for adult life is concerned, and is calculated to blunt the undeveloped faculties of the child."[1]

Play means growth for the body and development for the mind. The children who play, grow, and grow because they play. There is no sadder experience in the whole range of human life than to see a bright, intelligent, wholesome child leave school and start work in a factory. Gradually the flame of enthusiasm grows less bright, then it flickers hopelessly, and finally it goes out. The tale is told in the lack-luster eye, the harsh, indifferent voice, the languishing gait. The working child at first has no time for play; then he forgets to play, and finally he has no desire to play. The factory has done its

[1] *Labor Problems.* By Adams and Sumner. New York: Macmillan Co., 1905. Pp. 64-65.

work,—the child's mind has changed from an impressionable, plastic mass, to a set, changeless thing for which education is no longer probable or even possible. The universal testimony of those who teach in night school is that children who perform monotonous labor for ten hours each day are not capable of learning when night comes. The nervous strain and the reaction from it are too great. The child under sixteen can seldom be counted upon to do intellectual work after a ten-hour day of factory monotony.

Said a boy of twenty-one who had worked for two years in a woolen mill, starting when he was thirteen: "If I had stayed in that mill, I should be dead now, or, at any rate, dead to the world. We had a good boss, but the work was awful,—not hard, but so unvarying, day after day, that it ground out your soul."

This is generally true of child labor, but all child labor is not drudgery, particularly in the small establishments where the owner can and does take a personal interest in his employees. The great evil comes with the

growth of the large factories in which the child forms but one of the cogs in the machinery, where the very essence of the work is monotony. As industries are standardized, there are more and more places created where a machine, guided by a child, or an unskilled adult, does the work formerly performed by skilled men. If the child were learning to manufacture paper boxes, that would be, in itself, an education; but the child who spends its days turning in the edges of box covers, neither learns nor grows. The task is standardized and, from its very nature, hopelessly monotonous and deadening.

Child labor is a process of mind stunting. First the child is removed from the possibility of an education, taken from the school and placed in the factory where he no longer has an opportunity to learn; and then he is subjected to monotonous toil, for long hours, often all night, in unwholesome places, until his body and mind harden into the familiar form of the unskilled workman.

When the child drops from the ideal of play and joy to the misery of work and pain,

he exchanges a mental life for a physical one. Henceforth he lives for the body,—neither knowing nor caring for those necessary higher things.

IV. *Morality and Play*

Play has a moral code of its own. Not only does the hard player make the hard worker, but he makes the good citizen as well. Boys seldom cheat once at marbles; never twice. Ostracism from the group is the penalty, one which the average boy dare not incur. The rules of top spinning are inviolable. It is decided for all time who shall "show the first shake" and who shall have the first shot. No one cares to take a shot out of turn. Thus in their play each group of boys forms its social organization, and formulates the rules by which it is to be governed.

The child who grows up as an "only child" among older people lacks the development that comes from this group action and group morality of child plays. He is "different" from the other children, and when he goes to school for the first time he is in a new

world, which is wholly apart from his former experience. Such a child has no conception of the group morality which comes from the games of other children, and in consequence of this he often experiences difficulties in getting into the spirit of the others.

So, too, with the working child who has, from his earliest years, engaged in labor which meant nothing to him,—he lacks the group instinct. He does not know how to play with the others. It is obvious that in his work he is wholly deficient in any desire to co-operate in the common labor of his group. If co-operation is desirable and group action advantageous, what utter folly it is to foster a system like child labor, which deadens the very instincts that lead to effective group action.

"Playing fair" means much to the child and to the community. It is the element that makes the desirable citizen and the desirable associate. The child who learns to play fair will, nine times in ten, work fair, in the world of business. "Play at its best is only a

school of ethics."[1] That is why, unlike gymnastics, play has as much soul as body. "When a little girl plays 'dolls' or 'keeping house,' she is living herself into the deepest springs of human life."[2] The child who plays has the greatest opportunity for that soul growth for which there is always a demand far above the supply. Among the army of working children, there is more of cigarette smoking, loud talk, and bad talk than there is of play.

Play is to the child what poetry is to the man. Deprive either of this essential element, and from the misdirected sowing is reaped a harvest of misdirected lives. Instill into a boy's mind learning which he sees and feels not to have the highest worth, and which cannot become a part of his active life and increase it, and his freshness, spontaneity, and the fountains of his play slowly run dry. Such is the fate of the average child who spends his play time feeding with

[1] *Adolescence.* By G. S. Hall. New York: Appleton, 1904. Vol. i, pp. 283-284.

[2] *Moral Education.* By E. H. Griggs. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1904. P. 77.

hand and body the modern industrial mill. Premature work and premature decay of moral fiber are kindred forces running hand in hand toward the almshouse.

V. *Morality and Work*

The child who gets no chance to play loses the opportunity for moral development which play affords; the child who goes to work almost inevitably gains a positive code of immorality which could not be duplicated elsewhere.

Entering the workroom with adults, young and old, people of all types of morality and immorality, the child ceases to be a child in knowledge while he is still a child in ideas. There is no home influence or school influence to ward off the dangers, no mother or teacher to point out the hidden rocks. The child is pilot and captain, but how easily influenced and misguided!

In a great many cases, the nervous strain of the workroom is very great. The children are " speeded up " with the adults. When an outside opportunity offers any change, any

counter-excitement, it is seized eagerly, no matter what its character may be, for the sake of the change. Very, very often it is of the wrong character. "Child labor is generally acknowledged to be an irreparable injury to the children and to society at large. Bodies and minds are stunted and deformed; crime, violence, and all of the social evils which spring from a brutalized population are fostered."[1]

To be making a living, associated with all classes of people at an early and immature age, to be contributing to the family fund, and hence to be more or less independent,—what unwholesome things for the average child! Independence, before the proper age of independence, often means ruin.

Those who do not believe that factory children are knowing far beyond their years, should spend a noon hour with a group of factory boys, fourteen or fifteen years of age, and listen to their conversation. It is usually a thousand times more foul than that

[1] *Labor Problems.* By Adams and Sumner. New York: Macmillan Co., 1905. P. 20.

heard around the average saloon. One immoral person in a factory will easily contaminate the whole. Immorality is an infection which spreads quickly in a crowded workroom.

If the factory life is detrimental to the morals of the average boy, it is far more so to the average girl. One who believes otherwise should read "The Long Day," a story of a New York working-girl as told by herself.

One of the phases of the problem is aptly described by Juliet Wilbor Tomkins. "I know a ramshackle old building in New York in which the top floor is used by a manufacturer of electrical goods. On the floor beneath is a laundry, separated from the street by three long flights of stairs, which are utterly dark except for the gas jets insisted on by the authorities. At half-past five, every afternoon, the men come trooping down just as the laundry girls are let out, tired with the hardest kind of work, and flushed and warm with the long day in a steaming, enervating atmosphere. And night after night the gas

jets are mysteriously put out, so that all flock down together in pitch blackness. When you are tempted to believe that the evils of child labor are exaggerated, think what they mean to a girl when she is too young to protect or even to understand herself. Terrible things have been begun on those stairs, yes, and happened there; and they are not the only dark flights of stairs in the New York factories."[1]

After a thorough study of conditions in Pennsylvania, Mr. Peter Roberts writes:— "In interviews with physicians, each of them dwelt upon the moral and social evil of the factory life. Dr. Gerhardt of Allentown said that no vice was unknown to many girls of fifteen years, working in the factories of Allentown. . . ." Dr. Davis of Lancaster said:—"The result of it all is that these girls fade at an early age, and then they cannot discharge the functions of mothers and wives as they should."[2]

[1] "Turning Children Into Dollars." By Juliet Wilbor Tompkins. *Success Magazine*, January, 1905.

[2] From an unpublished Report by Peter Roberts to the Pennsylvania Child Labor Committee.

All factory life is not immoral, and immorality is not an essential element in factory life, but under present conditions, factory life and immorality too often go hand in hand, and it behooves society to look carefully to these things and see that they be reduced to the veriest minimum.

Play is the accompaniment of youth. Man has his play time: it is childhood. Man has his work time: it is adult life. The child cannot hope to escape all work, but the greater part of its life must be devoted to play if the functions of the adult life of work are to be well fulfilled. The child who works loses the opportunity for the spontaneous expression of the new life that can come only through play. The child's body is forming at fourteen, and its growth should not be hampered or marred by imposing upon it the restrictions that come with factory life.

As the body of the developing child is denied its complete development by work, so its mental development is curtailed and its moral sensibilities are often stunted by work. Child

labor does not necessarily mean stunting and degradation, but the probabilities are that child labor will mean child deterioration.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL COST OF CHILD LABOR

I. *Child Labor and Social Ideals*

THERE is a child labor problem, first because a large number of children are at work, and second because the probable result of their work will be the stunting of body or mind. All child workers do not have stunted bodies. As one great man of the nation, towering to his full six feet two, exclaimed, "I went to work in a factory when I was seven, and look at me." There is only one answer,—thousands of other children have gone to work at seven and look at them. At ten they bear the factory stamp, and they carry it through life.

In the vast majority of cases, the factory child of seven does not become great. He disappears among the "submerged tenth," an inefficient, fagged-out worker. The child worker does not as a rule develop into the

skilled artisan, the expert business man, or the picked soldier. What child labor employer is there who would exhibit the children in his factory as ideal types of American children? How many employers of child labor give their own children the advantages of a life of factory toil?

Child labor is really harmful to the child. Even if its body is not stunted, and its mind blunted, by the work performed, the child loses an opportunity for mind training in the schools, which can never be duplicated in later life.

What then?

The child is the embryo citizen. The citizen is the unit of society, and the society of to-morrow, composed of its individual citizens, will depend for its standard upon the training received by the children of to-day. If the men and women of to-day decide to advance civilization, to build strong and safe for the future, to know that the coming generation is working out some of the problems which have so vexed the present age,—in short, if the men and women of to-day have

social ideals, they must protect the children of to-day for the society of the future.

There are those who deny that there is any obligation on the present generation to provide for the future. A certain member of the English Parliament is reported to have demanded,—"What should we do for posterity? What has posterity ever done for us?" Generally speaking, however, the whole matter resolves itself, for each individual, into one question, "Have you social ideals?"

What are social ideals?

When men speak of heaven they voice a social ideal; when they dream of prosperity they anticipate a social ideal; brotherhood is a social ideal, and so are education, art, literature, and every other great and good hope or prophecy for the future. No matter what the basis, no matter what the form of the ideal, its goal is a state of society in which every man, woman, and child will have rights, privileges, and opportunities, equal to those of every other man, woman, and child.

Child workers are debarred from this equality. Long hours of monotonous toil un-

der unvaryingly wearisome conditions; the loss of play time; the loss of adequate schooling; the lack of any character-building influence, such as is supplied in the home or school,—these things are involved in child labor. They prove for the child worker a handicap which in the majority of cases is never overcome.

A wealthy nation, provided with an income sufficient to give to every citizen a comfortable living, cannot honestly believe in a social ideal and permit the existence of child labor. Each generation should hand down to the next generation a higher type of social structure if progress is to be insured. A social structure honeycombed and weakened by child labor can scarce be considered worthy of transmission to the future.

So much may be said in general terms of the undesirability of transmitting to the future children stunted and worn by premature toil. There are two very concrete ways in which child labor injures the society of the present and thus indirectly that of the future. In the first place it helps to destroy family

life; and in the second place, it helps to raise taxes.

II. *Child Labor and Family Life*

"The Peril and Preservation of the Home" is the title of one of Jacob Riis's books. To him it is of great importance, if national integrity is to be preserved, that the home be maintained at a high standard. In this position he is vigorously supported by the best sentiment of every Anglo-Saxon community. It is, then, of the utmost importance, in dealing with the cost of child labor, to determine what changes in the status of the home have been made by the entrance of children into industrial competition.

How can child labor influence family life?

There are two ways in which the influence may be felt. It may be either an influence exerted by the child in the family group to which it belongs as a child, or it may be an influence exerted by the child, grown to adult years, upon the family of which he or she is the head. Child labor may influence the family by taking children away from the home

for eleven hours a day and giving them an attitude wholly independent of home control, or it may stunt them physically or mentally, thus making them incapable of fulfilling the functions of fathers and mothers, of home-makers and home-keepers. In either case, child labor thwarts the purpose of the home.

In some localities all of the members of the family work in the mill. Many such instances are furnished in the South, where industry is developing for the first time. There it is customary for the children to work in the mill with both parents. If one remains outside of the mill, it is apt to be the father. Under these conditions the mother has no opportunity to maintain a family standard. She starts out with the children early in the morning, and, after spending ten or eleven hours at the factory, returns to the home to partake of the hastily and probably badly prepared meal, remains only long enough to sleep and eat, and then hurries back to the mill. If the children have any leisure time, they spend it on the streets, for the home presents no attractions.

Again and again writers emphasize the premature independence from family control enjoyed by the child wage-earner. Miss Jane Addams tells of a working-girl who was being anxiously watched by the Hull House authorities. The girl had a good home and a hard-working, conscientious mother, but she was gradually being led into worse and worse ways by the bad company that she kept on the streets at night. Finally a protest was made to the girl's mother. "Why do you allow your daughter to run the streets at night? Don't you know what she is getting into?" they asked her. The mother was heart-broken, and replied that she feared to say anything to her daughter, because she contributed to the family income, and would leave home if crossed in her wild whims. The girl's attitude was plainly expressed when she said: "My ma can't say anything to me,—I pay the rent."

The same point is emphasized by Mr. Emil G. Hirsh, an employer: "If I dared venture into the moral bearings of this part of the subject, I should insist with good reason that

nothing tends toward disrupting and undermining the family so perniciously as the premature independence of its immature members."[1] It is not customary to intrust to a child loaded, dangerous weapons, yet no weapons could be more dangerous than the independence of home control which comes with helping to earn the family living.

In addition to coming prematurely into a state of independence from family control, the child worker is surrounded by none of the influences which are ordinarily associated with home life. Ten or eleven hours in a factory, with a half hour to come and go, leaves little of the day that is not taken up with eating and sleeping; and a place in which one eats and sleeps is a lodging-house, not a home.

Not only is the child cut off during its working-hours from any uplifting influence, but it is often surrounded by unbearable monotony, bad air, unlovely companions, and every other

[1] "Child Labor from an Employer's Point of View." By Emil G. Hirsh. *Annals of American Academy,* vol. xxv, p. 554.

form of undesirable influence that may be developed where indiscriminate grouping of men and women occurs. Working under such conditions, and becoming gradually accustomed to such low standard surroundings, the child laborer adopts and accepts a low standard as a matter of course. Accustomed to a low standard of work as a child, the worker fails to demand a high standard as a man. The standards of child work are very low, as anyone who has visited industrial establishments will have observed. Generally, the greater the proportion of women and children in an establishment, the worse the conditions of the light, the air, and the sanitation. Men rebel. Women and children seldom complain except to one another. Thus the child laborer is generally educated as a low standard laborer.

Low standards are imposed upon child labor industries. The child, growing to manhood, and accepting these low standards, imposes them upon his family, and the gradual acceptance of such low standards lowers the standard of the entire community.

In a community where child labor is extensively employed, the entire family is forced to work for what proves to be a bare living. Looking at the question from the standpoint of the family, it is not therefore economical to have the children at work. Dr. J. R. McKelway, Assistant Secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, said in a recent address:—"Child labor reduces wages. Only 30 per cent. of the factory operatives of England are able to support their children through the sixteenth year without putting them to work. And here comes in the economic law that those occupations which admit the labor of women and children pay the whole family what the man alone receives in the occupations in which he is the sole breadwinner."

It will be more readily understood why the child fails to assist the family materially when the rate at which child workers are paid is borne in mind. The wage of the working child is startlingly low. "It ranges from $2.00 to $5.00, seldom $6.00 even in the more

agreeable industries."[1] In cities particularly this wage means very little, because of the great demands made upon it for car fare, lunches, and better clothes. "The wage value of the years from fourteen to sixteen is hardly more than the educational value . . . that he [the child] contributes to the family more than $1.50 is extremely doubtful."[1]

Child workers' wages are very low and, as a rule, add little to family income. Not only is this true, but the child who goes to work at fourteen probably deprives the family of earning capacity. There is little definite information on this point, but the Massachusetts Commission on Industrial and Technical Education concludes:—"The most important fact in the consideration of wages is that the child commencing at sixteen overtakes his brother beginning at fourteen in less than two years. That his total income in four years would equal that of his brother for six years we cannot prove, but the slight data at hand so indicates."[1]

[1] Report of the Massachusetts Commission on Industrial and Technical Education, 1906. Pp. 88-89.

The probable effects of child labor on the home of its parents are, therefore, three:—

1. The child becomes prematurely independent and indifferent to home restraint.
2. The wage of the father is lowered by the competition of the child.
3. The child who goes to work at fourteen is capable of earning less in the aggregate than the child who goes to work at sixteen.

Were these the sole effects of child labor on the family, the problem might well be called a serious one, but the family life of the whole present generation of child laborers is threatened by the existence of child labor. It is sad to think of children growing to manhood and womanhood, incapable of attaining even a normal physical or mental standard; but it is far more terrible to think that a large percentage of these low standard men and women will marry, and in their turn raise children to a similar mode of life.

The standard of the community can be maintained only by maintaining a high stand-

ard of home life. The high standard of home life depends for its existence and maintenance upon the standard of the father and the mother. The father must have the capacity to earn for his children a good living. He must likewise have the mental development and the development of character which will enable him to set for them a high standard of example. The absence of these qualities in the father almost inevitably disrupts the home.

Judge Lindsay relates a story of an exceedingly "tough" kid who was brought into his Juvenile Court. After being questioned for some time the boy admitted that the whole trouble lay with his father, who constantly beat and abused him, until in self-defense the boy ran away from home, became a tramp, and, never having learned to work, he stole in order to live. Such cases are common in the Juvenile Court. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, and unless proper fathers are provided, proper children are an impossibility.

The influence of the father upon family life

is of the utmost importance, but it is insignificant as compared with the influence of the mother. The father is usually away from home, but the mother spends the greater portion of her time there. It is with her that the children come into most intimate contact, and hers is by far the most important influence in the home.

The women who enter a factory at the age of twelve and spend the years from twelve to twenty inside of four dark, dirty walls amid whirring machines, in constant association with bad men and women, have not, in the first place, the physical stamina necessary to bring strong children into the world. As Dr. Davis of Lancaster, Pa., a great women-employing center, puts it,—"These factory girls fade at an early age, and then they cannot discharge the functions of mothers and wives as they should."

In the second place a girl who has spent her life in the factory is usually untrained in the maintenance of a home. There is a wide difference between an intense, high-strung, exciting factory life, and the quiet

routine of a properly conducted home, and the change from one to the other is difficult to make. There are a thousand things which girls who grow up at home learn, but which never become a part of the education of a factory child. There are arts of cooking and of cleaning, arts of care-taking and home-making that come only from the actual contact with these problems in the home. This contact the factory child has never had. An eleven-hour day in the factory precludes the possibility of any housework except the merest drudgery.

This lack of home-making knowledge has its inevitable consequences. There is a very definite relation between tough meat and underdone potatoes for supper, and a long session in the saloon for the husband after supper. A washerwoman who did much of the drying of her clothes in the two small tenement rooms in which the family sat, ate, and slept, was offered an opportunity to do the work at stationary washtubs in a Neighborhood House close by. Her ground for refusal was that she had always done her washing in her own room, and that it was too much trouble

to go outside. What refuge have the father and the children in such a family, save the open streets, the saloons, the public squares? Bad companions and unwholesome life are infinitely preferable to the dank, nauseating smell of clothes, forever washing and drying, and, as it seems, never washed or dried.

The solidarity of family life can be maintained only by trained mothers and capable fathers, mothers who will make inhabitable homes to the extent of their means, and fathers who will use every effort to provide the means with which to make the home inhabitable. Factory work for children goes far to thwart both ideals, by making of the boy an unskilled worker, incapable of earning large means, and by making of the girl a wife and mother, incapable of doing her duty by her husband, her home, or her children.

III. *Child Labor and Taxes*

There is a second social aspect of the problem, of almost equal interest with the effect of child labor on the family. What effect has child labor on taxes? A definite, accurate an-

swer to the proposition is impossible. Nothing can be done except to indicate some evident tendencies, and point to some apparent conclusions. Taking all of the facts into consideration, it would appear that child labor results not only in disintegrating family life, but in increasing taxes as well.

When the Superintendent of a Boys' House of Refuge was asked what proportion of the children who came to him were working children and what proportion were school children, he said that he could give no proportion, because the school child was a rare exception in his institution.

The community which allows its children to start work early in life, and in pursuit of their badly directed ideas, to learn things that result in their being committed to the House of Refuge, pays the penalty for its folly in the increasing taxes that go to support penal institutions.

The point is well illustrated by a study made recently in Chicago, of the first hundred delinquent boys who appeared before the Chicago Juvenile Court in 1909. Of this group

of one hundred boys, sixty-five were past fourteen, one had finished the eighth grade, eleven had finished the sixth grade, ninety were born in the United States. And, most important of all, for this study, "only thirteen of the one hundred claimed to have never worked. Of this thirteen six were past fourteen years of age. Not a single boy had ever been apprenticed in any trade." "At this present rate, 8 per cent. of all the children and 12 per cent. of all the boys born in Chicago, who live to be ten years of age, will be brought into the Juvenile Court as delinquents before they are sixteen. The City of Chicago pays for its delinquent children committed to reformatories $168,600 per year."[1]

The child, particularly the boy, who is thrown out upon the world too early in life, and made to face its responsibilities, is overwhelmed with its bigness and wearied by its never changing monotony. He seeks relief

[1] "Child Labor and the Juvenile Court." By James M. Britton, M.D. Proceedings of the Fifth Conference, National Child Labor Committee, 1909. Pp. 112-114.

for his strained nervous system in some kind of activity which leads ultimately to the door of the police court. The freedom of the factory, and of wage-earning, do more than aught else to break home restraints. The working boy is usually the street boy, because the street offers more opportunity for relaxation after the long strain of a day's work, presenting a pleasing contrast with the dull sameness of home.

A vast proportion of criminals begin their criminal career as boys by some petty offense, small in itself, and often committed through ignorance, and not through intent to do wrong. It would be interesting to know how much of this ignorance is the result of early wage-earning, with its lack of opportunity for real training.

How much of the cost of the criminal system may be traced in its origin to the premature employment of children, is uncertain. One point, however, is evident. If it be true that "lines of commitment and lack of schooling run parallel" at least a proportion of the tax cost of the criminal system may be

laid to child labor, which inevitably means lack of schooling for the child laborer.

In addition to facing the problem of supporting, in its houses of refuge and its penitentiaries, boys and men whose criminal careers have been started by a too early exposure to the trials and temptations of modern industrial life, the community must face the problem of maintaining in its hospitals and almshouses the crippled and degenerate and inefficient, who have been thrown out of the great industrial tread-mills and left ruined for life,—broken, incompetent workers. The studies which have been made indicate that the proportion of industrial accidents among working children is far higher than that among adult workers. Children are essentially ignorant and careless. They do not realize the dangers connected with their occupations, and constant injuries and accidents are the result.

The average child who enters industry at an early age closes behind him the door of opportunity to a higher and better industrial plane. The child laborer becomes a less ef-

fective producer than the child who had additional schooling advantages. As Jane Addams puts it:—"The pauperization of society itself, however, is the most serious charge." To paraphrase an illustration used by the Webbs, the factory says of the community, "You have educated the children in the public schools; now please give them to me, I will use them until they begin to demand an adult wage, and then I will turn them out again. If I have broken them down the community will take care of them in the poorhouse and the hospitals."

What connection is there between child labor and pauperism? In his book on *American Charities,* Dr. A. J. Warner takes statistics from various cities, and compiles, under several heads, the causes of pauperism. The first cause in importance is non-employment. In almost every case, the men who first lose their places and are most quickly thrown out in an industrial crisis, and who are the last to be taken on in times of industrial prosperity, are the men who are inefficient because they have neither sufficient

training nor sufficient bodily vigor to sustain long periods of activity.

How far is child labor responsible for this class of paupers? "We have a municipal lodging house in Chicago filled with tramps. . . . It is surprising to find how many of them are tired to death of monotonous labor, and begin to tramp in order to get away from it, as a business man goes to the woods because he is worn out with the stress of business life. This desire to get away from work seems to be connected with the fact that the men have started to work very early, before they had physique to stand up to it, or the mental vigor with which to overcome its difficulties, or the moral stamina which makes a man stick to his work whether he likes it or not."[1]

Laying aside for the moment any humane considerations, both crime and pauperism are expensive. A ready method of doing away with one element in these expensive, inhuman maladjustments is to do away with child la-

[1] "Child Labor and Pauperism." By Jane Addams. *Charities*, vol. xi, p. 302.

bor, which so readily leads to crime, pauperism, or both.

In the social fiber, in family life, in taxes, child labor is costly. It breaks down the individual, it destroys the family life of the present, and threatens the family life of the future, and last, probably least in importance, it adds to the number of incompetent that the community must support. From any social viewpoint, child labor is costly.

CHAPTER IV

CHILD LABOR—AN INDUSTRIAL WASTE

I. *The Newer View of Industry*

The Treasurer of the Alabama City Cotton Mill, Alabama, wrote to his agent:—"Every time I visit this mill, I am impressed with the fact that it is a great mistake to employ small help in the spinning-room. Not only is it wrong from a humanitarian standpoint, but it entails an absolute loss to the mill."[1] In a letter to the *Boston Transcript* the same gentleman writes:—"I have never been South without protesting to the agent . . . against allowing children under twelve years of age to come into the mill, as I did not consider them intelligent enough to do good work."[1]

There can be little question that child labor is a social waste. It hurts the children's

[1] *Child Labor in Alabama:* a pamphlet published by the Alabama Child Labor Committee.

bodies, deprives them of needed education, and often places them in questionable moral surroundings. Child labor is a social waste, and as such should be summarily dealt with; but what of its relations to industry? Society looks upon the destruction of its working material with comparative indifference, because society has not a "business viewpoint;" but what must be the viewpoint of industry? Would it not be a discovery fraught with the most far-reaching significance for American industry if the statement made by the Treasurer of the Alabama City Cotton Mill proved to be correct? What a waste would be involved in the employment of thousands of "small help" in the various branches of American industry!

The members of any social group are, under present conditions, liable to emphasize the individual problems much more than the social ones. "Let us abolish child labor," cries the social reformer. "Wait," warns the manufacturer, "you will drive me out of business."

Is that true?

In western Pennsylvania, northern West Virginia, and eastern Ohio, there is a region of natural gas deposits around which a glass bottle industry developed. The glass bottle industry formerly employed a large number of boys, some of whom assisted the blower, while others carried the bottles when blown to the annealing-oven, where they were cooled. As this geographically centered industry comprised three states, any attempt at legislation in one state was met by a prompt statement, "If you raise the age in Pennsylvania, we move our industry to West Virginia. We've got to have the boys in our business. If you legislate 'em out of it, we move." This threat, combined with consistent lobbying, for years prevented the passage of child labor legislation in these three states.

In Pennsylvania and Ohio the minimum age for night work in glass houses was fourteen, and in West Virginia, twelve, while in Indiana and Illinois, the two states directly west, the minimum limit for night work was sixteen. Slowly the supply of natural gas was exhausted in the Pennsylvania-West Virginia

field, and new fields were discovered in Indiana and Illinois, when, marvelous to relate, the glass industry began to move from a state with fourteen-year minimum to a state with a sixteen-year minimum. And the boys? *the* "problem" over which the reformers and glass men had contended for years? They were replaced by adults or by machinery. The real crux of the situation was not the boys at all, but the natural gas supply—the cheap fuel.

This is a single instance of the effect of eliminating child labor from an industry. Is it an isolated case, or a general rule? Has the cotton industry developed in the South because of the presence of quantities of children, ready to work in the mills, or because of the proximity to the fields where the cotton is produced, to a cheap fuel supply, and to an abundance of water-power? If children under sixteen were prohibited from working in the Southern cotton mills, would the manufacturers move? Would it not be a discovery pregnant with the most far-reaching importance for the future, if it were found that

child labor is not at all necessary to industry, and that, after all, it entails just as great an industrial waste as it does a social one?

Child labor is wasteful to industry. The statement of the Treasurer of the Alabama City Mill is not an isolated opinion. Manufacturers everywhere are being forced to the new viewpoint. The philosophy is well summed up by a silk manufacturer:—"So far as the economy of production goes, as a manufacturer I think we can do without the labor of children."[1] Child labor is undoubtedly cheap labor. But is not the product cheaper than the labor involved in its creation?

II. *The Industrial Inefficiency of Child Labor*

Leaving aside for a moment the very pertinent question as to whether the extensive employment of children will materially affect their efficiency as adult workmen, it may

[1] "Restriction on Child Labor in Textile Industries." By Howell Cheyney, Cheyney Silk Mills, So. Manchester, Conn. Proceedings Fifth Conference on Child Labor, National Child Labor Committee, 1909. P. 91.

be stated as a general truth that the employer of to-day cannot afford to employ young children. Says the manager of a jute mill:—"We used to employ one hundred and thirty-seven kids, but we have cut the number down to eighty-seven this year, and we expect to go on reducing it. Our mill is turning out more stuff than it used to, and we find it cheaper to work with older help."

In all industries, and in all sections, thoughtful employers who have considered the matter have reached the same conclusion. They have decided that it is in the long run cheaper to invent machinery or to employ adult help and thus replace the children. The "kids" are "quick" and "cheap," but they are unreliable, wasteful, and expensive as accident causers.

Child labor is cheap labor, and the product of this cheap labor is a cheap product. Miss Jane Addams tells of seeing a child of five in a Southern cotton mill helping to make sheeting for the Chinese Army. The product was poor and very cheap, but so was the market for which the product was destined.

"In the Georgia Legislature last summer a noted cotton manufacturer, a member of the Georgia Senate, in an eloquent plea against the child labor system, challenged his associates in that business who were also members of the Senate, to disprove his statement that the same quality of cotton goods manufactured in the South was sold at a price from two to four cents a pound lower than these goods manufactured in the North. . . . A Georgia cotton mill imported skilled laborers for the manufacture of fine goods. The goods were sold at Philadelphia and New England prices. Once some tags containing the name and location of this mill were slipped into the bales of finished cloth by the workmen. The mill management immediately received a letter from the commission merchant urging that this should never be done again; that he had concealed the fact that this particular mill was located in the South, and thereby had been able to get northern prices for the goods."[1]

Thus the prevalence of child labor in an industry at once throws discredit on its product. "Industries so recruited cannot long compete with similar industries recruited from men who have been technically trained. In the long run that industry, wherever in the world it is located, which combines with general intelligence the broadest technical knowledge and the highest technical training, will command the markets of the world."[2]

[1] "Child Labor in the Southern Cotton Mills." By A. J. McKelway. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. xxvii, p. 266.

[2] Conclusion of the Massachusetts Commission on Industrial and Technical Education, 1906. P. 19.

It is evident, then, that even in an industry as intimately dependent on child labor as the glass bottle industry is said to be, the child labor is only incidental to the supply of fuel; that for the average manufacturer, machinery and adults are cheaper in the long run than children, and that the existence of child labor in an industry lowers the value of the product. Not only does child labor play havoc with the industry of the present, but it detracts materially from the industrial possibilities of the future.

III. *The Cost to Industry*

"It may be stated as a safe proposition that for every dollar earned by a child under fourteen years of age, tenfold will be taken from their earning capacity in later years."[1] Children are inefficient as child workers, and become inefficient adults because of their work as children.

These statements hold true under many different conditions. The Massachusetts

[1] "A Business Man's View of Child Labor." By S. W. Woodward. *Annals of American Academy*, vol. xxvii, p. 362.

Commission above quoted reports that eighty per cent. of the children at work between the ages of fourteen and sixteen are in mills and unskilled industries. "For the great majority of children who leave school and enter employments at the age of fourteen or fifteen, the first three or four years are practically waste years so far as the actual productive value of the child is concerned, and so far as increasing his industrial or productive efficiency."[1] From the standpoint of the industry it is clearly a waste of industrial efficiency and future producing capacity to have children begin work at an early age. The problem of securing efficient workers to-day is only one of the problems of industry. Quite as important, if not more so, is the problem of securing efficient workers in the future.

Before the Industrial Commission, Chief Factory Inspector Campbell of Pennsylvania was asked:—

"Question. What effect has the employment of children on the wages of adult labor?

"Answer. There is no doubt it has some effect.

[1] Report of the Massachusetts Commission on Industrial and Technical Education, p. 18.

"Question. You believe it has an injurious effect?
"Answer. There is no doubt of it at all in my mind." [1]

The Secretary-Treasurer of the Boot and Shoe Makers' Union, testifying before the same commission, said:—"The introduction of child labor is quite a factor, sometimes displacing the head of the family. There was an instance in Marlboro where a man was receiving $2.00 a day; the firm turned him off and put in his own son at $1.00 at the same job." [2]

Many authorities, dealing with the economic side of child labor, lay special emphasis on this point, insisting that men must give place to children, when the latter are willing to work at a considerably lower figure.

There can be little question that the employment of children disemploys adults. Whether or no these adults ultimately find work in some new industry which springs up in response to the constantly increasing demands of civilization, is aside from the ques-

[1] Industrial Commission, vol. vii, p. 52.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 363.

tion. That they are displaced, at least temporarily, is evident.

But the problem has an even more serious side. Child labor results in lowering the wage standard of the entire group in which it exists. The argument is well put by Carroll D. Wright in the following words:—

"There seems, in recent times, to have occurred a change in the relation of wages to support, so that, more and more, the labor of the whole family is necessary to the support of the family; that, in the majority of cases, working men in the commonwealth do not support their families by their individual earnings alone. The fathers rely or are forced to depend upon their children under fifteen years of age, who supply, by their labor, from one-eighth to one-sixth of the total family earnings."[1]

Looking at the matter from the standpoint of practical experience in the mines, John Mitchell gave the following testimony before the Industrial Commission:—

[1] Carroll D. Wright, Sixth Annual Report, Massachusetts Bureau of Labor, p. 384.

"Question. Does the influence of child labor reach into all classes of miners? For instance, if you find a man with three or four boys, and you find another man who, perhaps, has a large family of girls. . . . If it comes to a question of competition between these men, who will succeed and why?

"Answer. The one having the boys would because they would obtain work in the mines." [1]

Both phases of the question are thus summarized by John Spargo:—"It is a well-known fact that the competition of children with their elders entails serious consequences of a twofold nature, first, in the displacement of adults, and, second, in the lowering of their wage standards." [2] There is no question among the authorities on the subject. All are agreed that the labor of children replaces the labor of men, or else forces the men to take lower wages as a result of the child competition.

This displacement of men by children, and the lowering of men's wages by a competition with child wages, means to the laboring men who are affected by it, a lowered standard of life. The man who has a family of half-

[1] Report of the Industrial Commission, vol. xii, p. 46.

[2] *The Bitter Cry of the Children.* By John Spargo. New York: Macmillan, 1906. P. 192.

grown children must send them to work in an endeavor to supplement the family income, and the man who has a family of small children to keep, or no children at all, must suffer because of this child competition. In some cases, child labor is impossible, because of the character of the work, but in the textile industries, the glass works, and the tobacco factories, children are employed and men discharged.

Is child labor "an industrial waste"? Among the thinking men who have gone carefully over the ground, there is but one answer. Child labor cheapens the product, lowers the industrial standard of the present, and threatens the industrial standard of the future.

CHAPTER V

THE CAUSES OF CHILD LABOR

I. *The Discussion of Causes*

In the voluminous literature which has recently appeared on the general subject of child labor, little careful attention has been devoted to the causes underlying the problem. The history of child labor has been related; its evils have been depicted in minutest detail; remedies innumerable have been suggested; but nowhere has particular emphasis been laid upon the reasons for its existence. Child labor literature clearly shows that many of the writers have assumed certain causes and then, with this assumption as a basis, they have proceeded to devise and apply remedies.

This chapter aims to show that the coercive, legislative remedies that have been adopted are not calculated to work a perma-

nent cure for the evils of child labor, because they are directed at its result rather than at its cause.

What are the causes of modern child labor? An answer to the question may be found by discussing four general groups of causes:—(1) industrial evolution; (2) greed; (3) necessity; (4) ignorance and indifference. The next few pages will be devoted to an analysis of these groups in order to ascertain, if possible, which one or which combination of them is the moving force which has sent three-quarters of a million of children into the industries of the United States.

II. *Industrial Evolution*

Without the factory system child labor in its present form would be impossible. During a period of 150 years industry has gone from the home to the factory, involving in the transition the minute subdivisions of labor which must necessarily accompany work on a large scale. The operations requiring skill are performed by skilled persons, and

those which are purely mechanical are performed by an unskilled laborer until a machine is invented to replace him.

Modern invention has gone so deeply into the details of mechanical operations, and division of labor has rendered the part which any one man performs so simple, that it is an easy matter to substitute the actions of a machine for the mechanical, standardized work of an unskilled or often of a semi-skilled laborer. Hence modern machinery; hence the opportunity for machine tending,—a purely mechanical task, possible even for a child; hence the opportunity for an unskilled child to become a part of the most intricate system of manufacturing, by performing one infinitely small operation in connection with many other operations, which, combined and unified, result in a substantial product.

Can this industrial evolution which has remade industry be described as a cause of child labor? If this view of the situation be accepted, it is apparent that the responsibility for the prevalence and increase of

child labor in a modern community may be placed upon the character of modern industry.

In the South, where child labor in the cotton mills has developed some of the worst child labor conditions with which the country must contend, machinery is being built just high enough to accommodate a child. Is it, however, fair to say that the child labor in the Southern mills is due to the character of the machinery which is being introduced into those mills?

An unknowing organism, such as a machine, can scarcely be held responsible, if, while operated by human intelligence, it becomes a party to a social wrong; yet the responsibility must rest somewhere. Is it reasonable to place the responsibility for child labor upon a machine which is being used, as the servant of man? Such an explanation is clearly inadequate. It leads to no conclusion as to the cause that is sending the children to work.

The evolution of modern industry unquestionably forms the basis upon which child

labor rests; but so does the use of fire; so the atmosphere; so the old earth herself. Modern industry forms the basis for the existence of child labor, just as the crust on the surface of the earth forms the basis for man's life. Each allows of the continuance of certain activities, but in neither case can the immediate cause be traced to modern industry or to the earth's crust. The earth's crust is never spoken of as the "cause" of men's activity; no more can modern industry be described as the cause of child labor. Child labor without modern industry would be impossible, yet modern industry cannot be described as the active cause which is at present leading children to work.

Where, then, can the responsibility be laid? It must clearly depend on some personal factor. Can the responsibility be laid upon the parent who, in ignorance of what the ultimate consequences will be, sends the child out to labor in the fields of modern industry; upon the parent who is compelled by the presence of many children and few dollars to supplement the family income in every conceivable

manner in order to provide an adequate subsistence?

And what can be said of the manufacturer who employs the children, often in ignorance of the facts, but with adequate opportunity to discover them if he so desires? Of the manufacturer who pays $2 or $3 as wages for child labor, and takes an enormous surplus in profits? Of the manufacturer who knowingly, for the sake of an extra automobile or some other plaything that may appeal to his fancy, takes from the children the vitality and life which he can never replace? Of the employer who pays his adult laborers such low wages that it is a physical impossibility for them to bring up a family and procure not the luxuries, but the bare necessities of life, and who are, therefore, compelled to send their children at the earliest moment into the mills?

And what shall the community which permits such a system to prevail answer for itself? The community which allows an employer to pay wages that are below the line of possible subsistence, and to take from the

children services for which he gives no adequate return; which allows parents, often through blind greed, to live from the work of their children; which allows the child, the future mainstay of civilization, to enter upon a life that may lead to physical, mental, and moral decay or ruin?

Which one, or which combination of these factors is sending children to work?

III. *Greed as a Cause of Child Labor*

Greed means a desire for appetite satisfaction. Defined thus, how extensively does it enter as a cause of child labor?

"They most all leave after their First Communion. The boys want to gamble, and some of the girls want to buy fancy ribbons, so they go to work, and in a short time you tell them by the 'factory voice,'—all the factory children have it,—especially the girls." In these words the principal of a large parochial school portrayed the greed of the child, and it is a very real factor in the situation. From many homes children go out to work, not because there is any necessity nor even

any wish on the part of the parent, but because the child longs to become a wage-earner, and indulge in freedom which comes only with pocket money. Among the great majority of boys pocket money is a rarity unless they are at work, and in view of the character of modern ideals, it is not strange that the average youngster should be so anxious to get his share.

In the small industrial towns, many cases are found where the child leaves school against the parents' wishes and goes to work. When compelled to return to school, the child "plays hookey," and gets back to the factory, or mine, or mill, where his friends are employed. "All the boys is at work, and I ain't goin' to go to school," is an attitude often found where most of the boys work, and where, if nine members of "the gang" are earning wages, it requires strenuous pulling in the opposite direction to keep the last member in school.

The age of youth is the age of education. Children are not expected to form mature judgments, nor to understand what things

are best for them to do, hence it is manifestly ridiculous to expect the child to be able to decide judiciously between the school, with its education, and work, with its freedom and pocket money.

The desire of the child to get money, and the things which money buys, can scarcely be classed as greed, nor can it be assigned as a moving cause of child labor. It is rather an incidental one. On the other hand, there is a greed of parents which deserves the most absolute condemnation.

In one soft-coal mining town a man was found who, though hale and hearty, spent most of his time carousing at the saloon. He was enabled to do this because his three boys, of nineteen, seventeen, and eleven, were steadily employed in the mines, where they were able to make an average of about $100 a month, when the work was good. The family owned a farm of sixty-five acres, a good house and barn, and a horse and cow. One sister was making good wages "working out," and the mother did her best. Thus, in spite of father's idleness, the family

lived very well and kept him in liquor besides.

Such cases are comparatively rare in the North, but in the South the prevalence of child labor and parental idleness is notorious, and has developed into a definite social custom. A poor white, idling at mid-day around the saloon in a small Southern town, is said to have replied to an investigator, "What all's the use of me workin' when I have three head of gals in the mill?"

"Greedy and indifferent parents," you will say. That is very true. These cases, and many like them which might be cited, present that side of the problem. There are parents who consider their children as an asset from which they have a right to live, as they would live from their horses, or garden patches, or any other possession. Yet these cases are the exception rather than the rule. "Greedy and indifferent parents" are not so prevalent in the community as many writers on child labor would have their readers suppose. Cases constantly come to light, where, for a mess of pottage, parents sell

their children into industrial slavery. Yet a close acquaintance with the parents of working children shows that they are very much like other parents. They love their children as much and have as much care for their well-being as other fathers and mothers. They send them to work, as a rule, only when necessity demands it.

Would many "pocket-money-saving" children and a few greedy parents have caused the child labor problem? Undoubtedly not. Neither childish love of money nor parental greed can be assigned as a leading cause, nor even as an important cause of child labor.

Can the same be said of the greedy employer,—greedy, not for children, but for profits; the manufacturer who must needs have profits even though he grind up a few children's futures in the getting of them?

All manufacturers are not greedy. Many give attention and study to the child labor problem, because they feel that it is hurting them as well as the public at large, but there are a group of manufacturers who are madly struggling for wealth, and so madly do they

struggle, that they overlook all human relations and obligations. Wealth they must have, and that quickly. Children are worn out in the process? No matter. Homes are wrecked and the community made poorer by the loss of some of its best bone and sinew? No matter. Look at our ledger, look at our cashbook, look at our undivided surplus! Look at them,—and then behind them.

Such employers are in the smallest minority, yet when they exist in a competitive industry, their competitors must do as they do or go out of business. Morris Hillquit once said, in the course of a speech:—"If Jesus Christ came on earth to-day and established a coat shop on Hester Street, he would be forced to do one of two things,—either to exploit his workers or to go out of business." The same thing holds good for child labor. The meanest, hardest, cheapest employer sets the pace. One such can force nineteen others to provide for their employees the most rigorous of working conditions, or fall behind in the race for business.

It is to protect the children from this class

of employers that child labor laws are enacted. They are men hungering after profits,—and when they take them in the form of children, the community balances the account. But competition is disappearing from industry, and is being replaced by combination. Moreover, manufacturers are coming to see, more and more, the undesirability and the unprofitableness of child labor. Child labor has ceased to be an industrial benefit and has become instead an industrial detriment. And the thinking manufacturer recognizes this fact. But even granting for the sake of argument that the average employer is a profit-hungry, child-grabbing ogre, it would be impossible for the children to get into the mills unless they were willing to go, or unless their parents were willing to send them. The manufacturer may provide the means for child labor, but he cannot secure the children without their consent, or that of their parents.

The statements which are constantly made, laying the entire blame for child labor upon the manufacturer, are, therefore, unfounded

and unfair. The employer may, as in the case of industrial evolution, make child labor possible, but he does not actively cause it.

There is still another factor—the greedy public. "Give us dividends," cry the stockholders, "give us dividends, and big ones!" and the president of the company, with his salary at stake, turns in the children. "Give us bargains," cry the consumers, "give us bargains, and cheap ones," and the retailer, his business at stake, turns to the sweat shop and child labor.

A demand for cheap finery, for bargains, for cheap goods of all kinds, is a demand on the sweat shop and on child labor. Child labor goods are cheap goods. The South has found this true to her cost. It requires skill to produce quality as much as it ever did before the invention of the machinery which is doing the heavy and mechanical work of the world.

But the public, by its insatiable demand for cheapness, furnishes the manufacturer with the incentive for cheap production. He, in turn, advertises for child labor. One factor

is the complement of the other. Neither, however, furnishes an explanation of the hosts of working children in all parts of the country. The public may demand tawdry products; the machinery may be built to accommodate a child; the manufacturer may advertise, "Small girls wanted," but why do the small girls come? For the explanation search must be made elsewhere.

IV. *Necessity and Child Labor*

"When I was a boy of seven, I went to work, and I don't see any good reason why boys shouldn't do it now. I learned my business that way, and from my point of view, it's better to learn it by starting at the bottom and working up." This attitude is a common one, but much less common than it was ten years ago. Men are learning that their doing things in a particular way furnishes no good reason why the next generation should do things in the same way. Progress can be made only when each generation does things a little differently.

There are still a few people who use the

" I started to work at seven " argument to prevent the enactment of child labor legislation, but a careful review of the facts in the case shows that these men " started to work at seven " as helpers on a farm or in a country store, where all-round educational work was the daily routine. The owner of the farm or store was a friend of the family, and " wanted to see Jim's kid get a good start." From first to last there was a close personal contact between the " boss " and the boy. From work on such a basis, it is a long and fatal step to work in a modern factory or mill, or store, where all is minute subdivision of tasks and of responsibility.

The boy who went to work on a farm or in a country store, " learned the business " early because the head of the business had a keen interest in his success, and kept close watch of every stage in his progress. He was given the best chance that there was to succeed. At all times he was under the watchful eye of " the firm." Under modern industrial conditions the boy starting to work has little more chance of " learning the busi-

ness,'' than a British tar has of becoming Lord High Admiral. Furthermore, one-third of the child laborers are girls who do not wish to " learn the business,''—who are not even wanted in the business. They have a commodity to sell,—their labor,—and they are willing to sell it cheaply to the employer who hires them. It is a mere matter of bargain and sale.

Again, the school has to-day in large measure replaced the " learning a business " in the old way. Some firms, particularly those engaged in technical work, will scarcely take any but college men in the higher branches of their business. There is a great and an increasing demand for men trained in Trade and Manual Training Schools, and such are given the preference. The time is past when it is necessary for a boy to go to work at seven or ten, or even fourteen, to learn the business. It is becoming a universal rule in many houses to insist on the completion of a certain amount of high school or college work before starting in business. There is no longer a necessity for the child to go to work

at an early age in order to learn to do his part of the world's work.

Clearly, then, from the standpoint of the child, there is no excuse for his working at an early age. There is no necessity of child labor for a "learning of the business." But there are other sides to the necessity problem. From the standpoint of the child, there is no necessity. What of the parent?

"The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose." The man looking for a justification of some policy will most easily find it in a plea that a particular act is necessary to prevent individual hardship and suffering.

It is probably fair to say that no legislature which ever met to discuss a child labor bill was not confronted with the "widowed mother" argument. Indeed, it sometimes happens that the very firm whose unguarded machinery snuffed out the life of the father, will plead hardest for the protection of the "helpless widow and her baby orphans," and will allow the "baby orphans" to get the same place in the same factory that was responsible for the death of the father.

It is a noticeable fact that the " widowed mother " argument is always used by the employer—never by the labor union interests which, representing the interests of the woman and her children, to whom they may well be paying death benefits, is almost unanimous in urging greater restrictions on the employment of children.

The necessity of the " widowed mother," so often and so effectively used to prevent the change of bad conditions, is clearly representative of only a small portion of working children. Probably not more than one working child in a hundred is the sole support of a widowed mother. At the present time there is, however, a great group of workers in the United States whose wages are so low as to make it practically impossible for them to provide a decent living for their children.

Aside from the necessity arising in the family because of the disability of its head, there are cases in every community of men employed as unskilled and as semi-skilled laborers, who have large families,—their

name is legion. The average pay of such men is $1.50 a day, or $9.00 a week. In a modern city one-fifth of this income goes for rent. Setting aside 25 cents a week for light, and 50 cents for fuel, there remains $6.50. A man and his wife and four children, ranging in ages from one to seven years, will thus have less than a dollar a day to pay for clothing, medicine, car fare, and extras. If we allow two-thirds of this $6.50 for food, it will mean that each of the twenty-one meals eaten in the week must be gotten for 20 cents,—a 20-cent meal for six persons.

The words, "greedy and indifferent parents" are often emphasized in speaking and writing about child labor. In the case of the unskilled worker, the parent who sends the children to work at fourteen or even thirteen, is neither greedy nor indifferent.

Eliminating the "widowed mother," there is a family necessity, common in every industrial community, which results in the child's being sent to the mill. Here is a clear undoubted case of necessity,—a necessity which is being felt more keenly every day as

the rise in wages lags behind the jump in the cost of living. It is a necessity so real that children are sent to the mills, not because parents are "greedy and indifferent," but because the whole amount which a hard-working day laborer can earn will not keep his family supplied with the necessities, not to mention the luxuries of life.

In addition to pleading for the widow and the orphan, the employer who fights child labor legislation invariably pleads for himself. The point is well illustrated by a comment from the *National Glass Budget,* published in Pittsburg and representing the glass manufacturing interest.

Let it be borne in mind that in New York children under sixteen work only eight hours per day, and those hours must be between eight A.M. and five P.M.; in Illinois no child under sixteen may work after seven P.M. or before seven A.M.; but in Pennsylvania children of fourteen may work in glass houses at any hour of the day or night, providing this working time does not exceed eight consecutive hours. In view of these facts, and

of a law prepared to bring legislation in Pennsylvania nearer the high standard attained by New York and Illinois, the *Budget* says:—"In other words, our legislators will be requested to lend their support to a movement which, if successful, will drive out of our state the industries which have lifted her up to the proud position of first place in the galaxy of states."[1]

It is a common argument often heard, and echoed and re-echoed in the legislative halls. In Pennsylvania the argument was crystallized into the law of 1905. No child, says the law, under sixteen, may work between the hours of nine P.M. and six A.M., except "where the material in process of manufacture" would be wasted if allowed to stand over night, and, "to prevent waste or destruction of such material," boys of fourteen may work at any hour of the night. Blessed "material in process of manufacture," what crimes do Americans commit in thy name!

As has already been pointed out, manu-

[1] *National Glass Budget*, December 22, 1906.

facturers are coming to see more and more clearly that child labor is not necessary to industry, but is in most cases positively harmful. Tradition decrees that in glass bottle works, children of nine and ten must be hired to carry the bottles because they are "nimble" and can "handle themselves," yet in certain factories machinery has been introduced which replaces the boys and saves money.

What part does "Necessity" play among the causes of child labor? The necessary thing for a young American to do is to attend school. There is no necessity for his working in order to "learn the business." The necessity of child labor to the manufacturer is traditional rather than real. The only really important part played by necessity, is the actual need of the great group of parents whose wage is so low as to preclude the possibility of bringing up their family decently, in the absence of some addition to the man's wage. And this necessity of the unskilled worker's family is a real, vital cause sending children to work.

V. *Ignorance and Indifference as Causes of Child Labor*

The average child likes to "earn money." There is a fascination about it, and an excitement accompanying it that is well nigh irresistible to the healthy American boy.

"How do you like the mines, Tom?" I asked a fourteen-year-old boy who had been working for some time in a soft-coal mine.

"I don't like 'em. Just at first it was all to the good. We was dirty and nobody said nothin' to us. We used to carry dinner-pails and the school kids wished they was us. It went good for a month or so, and then I begins to get tired, and wants to lay off, but 'No sir,' says the old man, 'you started in and you got to stick at it.' It ain't no fun after the first month, I can tell ye."

This case is typical of a large number. It is no uncommon thing to find children going to work with all the enthusiasm of childhood, taking up a "job," and soon tiring of it. By that time, however, the parents have felt the added value of the wages of the child to

the family income, and there is a tendency to insist on the child's staying at work, even in cases where the parent originally insisted that the child remain in school.

Investigations have shown that when the child does get tired of one job and quits, he simply goes to some other form of labor. From this arises one of the worst abuses of child labor, the rapid change from one industry to another, and the consequent failure to become proficient along any line. Thus, in addition to the evil effects of the work and lack of schooling, the child early acquires the "moving on" habit, which grows up with the constant changing of jobs, and, if fully developed, results inevitably in the professional "tramp," who is always "moving on."

The child goes to work through ignorance of the real conditions of life, and of the good things sacrificed. A bright lad in school often becomes a stolid drudge in the factory, never learning, never rising, condemned because of inefficiency to be a common drudge to the end of his days.

The children are ignorant of the step they

are taking when they begin to work in a factory without having had a chance to learn the best things in the schools, while without the consent of parents this step would be impossible. Yet, the child who goes to work in ignorance of conditions and of ultimate consequences, is by no means culpable, nor is it reasonable to describe childish ignorance as a cause of child labor.

In many families a real need exists for the wages that the child can earn, because the wage of the father is so low that he cannot support himself. In many other cases, the parents are not actively interested in the question of the school and of child labor.

"I don't believe it hurts Sam to work nights," said one father; "he's strong and he likes the work." The boy was fourteen years old. But the parent had never been taught that the growing body needs a certain quota of rest which in the average household, because of the turmoil and noise going on by day, can be secured only at night.

When a child says, "I don't want to go to school any more, I'm going to work," par-

ents are apt to acquiesce, instead of asserting their authority and compelling the child to obtain at least a minimum amount of schooling. Here, too, there is not only ignorance of the most pronounced sort, but, in some cases, an indifference as to what really becomes of the child.

The manager of a large factory seldom sees his "kids." The "business end" of the work occupies his entire attention. Competition is sharp and he is constantly struggling for supremacy in a market which is dominated by men who are fighting for profits. The manager looks after the "business end," and leaves to his superintendents the task of hiring and discharging the help and seeing that they are cared for in accordance with the provisions of the factory law. In a few cases, much fewer than they should really be, the manufacturer makes provisions not required by law. The great majority, however, simply handle their "business," leaving to their foremen or superintendents the task of complying with the law.

In many factories, even the provisions of

the law are not observed, because the " business end " of the work is " running behind," and " business comes first every time." " Good God! Do these children work in my factory? " represents the position not of one, but of many manufacturers. It would fall from the lips of thousands could they be confronted with the conditions of their mills as they actually exist.

The majority of manufacturers are, however, neither ignorant nor indifferent, but alive to the undesirability of child employment. Even in the case of the minority who are ignorant of conditions, or indifferent to law, it cannot be fairly said that their attitude constitutes a cause of child labor. It helps to make child labor possible, but it is not a moving factor, leading children to the mills.

Aside from the ignorance of the child, the indifference of some parents, the ignorance of many others, and the devotion of employees to the " business end " of their work to the exclusion of the " human end," there is a cause of child labor more potent and far-

reaching than all of these combined, for it includes them all,—the ignorance and indifference of society. Attention has already been called to the social greed, the demand for things—many and cheap,—and the fact that such a demand inevitably leads to the production of cheap goods by cheap labor.

Cheap labor means the sweat shops and the labor of little children. Could the average member of the purchasing public be made to see the revolting conditions out of which "bargain" products come, and to demand goods made under fair conditions, a long step would have been taken toward solving the child labor problem. Such a result can be attained only by education extending over a long series of years. The public mind is slow to move, and even slower to change from an old, deep rut.

The social demand for cheap goods makes it possible for manufacturers to employ children, but it does not send the children to work. The chief factor in doing that, also a result of social ignorance and indifference, is the school system.

The fact that 186,000 children, between ten and thirteen, are employed in the United States in gainful occupations other than agriculture, is a proof conclusive that the community has failed to insist upon school attendance. Even when the children are kept out of the factories they are not in the schools, and it is in that fact that the leading cause of child labor may be read.

"The most potent reason, in my opinion, why the children are in the factory, is our school system," says Jean M. Gordon, a Louisiana factory inspector. A careful canvass of any group of child laborers will reveal the fact that this statement is absolutely true. The average working child would far rather work in the factory than return to school.

VI. *The Why of Child Labor*

The preceding analysis of industrial evolution, greed, necessity, and ignorance and indifference, narrows the field of causes to two. The average child laborer goes to work because his family needs the income, or be-

cause he " hates school." Often, both reasons are operating.

Family necessity is a prime cause of child labor. It is not, as many writers would lead us to believe, dire poverty which sends children to work. The wolf could be kept from the door without the aid of the children, but then there is a difference between warding off starvation, " the wolf," and maintaining the family on a wholesome diet. The wages of the father alone will buy food and keep back the wolf. An additional $3 a week will buy more food and insure a better diet. The parent chooses the better diet for the family, and the child goes to work.

The child goes to work because the father cannot earn enough to support the family; the father's earning power is low either because his training has been defective, or because low-standard people, usually immigrants, are bidding against him for jobs, and are willing to live on very little; in the competitive struggle for jobs, the lowest bidder gets the work, and sets a standard to which the others must conform; and this

standard has been set so low that men cannot provide a decent living for their families.

It is impossible to say just what proportion of the workers of the United States are receiving wages which are so low that they are compelled to supplement them by sending their children to the factory. There are, however, figures which roughly indicate the facts.

Dr. Robert C. Chapin analyzed a series of schedules of workingmen's family expenditures, collected in Manhattan Island, and concluded that:—"An income of $900 or over probably permits the maintenance of a normal standard, at least so far as the physical man is concerned. . . ."

These figures were compiled for the Borough of Manhattan, but, with the exception of rent, none of the other items would be materially reduced in any large-sized industrial town or city. According to this analysis $900 is a minimum wage which will permit the maintenance of physical efficiency for a man, wife, and three children under fourteen years

of age. What proportion of the families in the United States receive $900?

An investigation made in 1903 by the United States Department of Labor covered 25,440 families, among which the average total income was $749.50. These families were of wage-earners, and were taken from all of the representative states and industrial centers. Of 610 native families having three children, the average income was $666. Of 518 foreign families having three children, the average income was $654.

The most recent wage investigation is that made by the United States Commissioner of Labor into wages in the Bethlehem Steel Works.[1] In all, 9,184 men were employed. Of this number

48.5% were receiving less than 16 cents per hour ($550 per year).

74.5% were receiving less than 22 cents per hour ($675 per year).

91.8% were receiving less than 30 cents per hour ($950 per year).

[1] Report on Strike at Bethlehem Steel Works. By Charles P. Neill, Washington, 1910. P. 60.

The discrepancy between the minimum physical efficiency standard, $900, and the wages actually received, is startling. To be sure, the $900 estimate was made for New York City, while the wage figures refer to the country at large, and to a small city, but a discrepancy still exists.

Here, then, is a real cause of child labor. It is clearly a social and economic one; social in so far as society is responsible for maintaining its children—economic in so far as the smallness of the income of a definite group in the community does not enable the man to provide adequately for the needs of his family. In no sense is it an individual cause.

The second important cause of child labor to which allusion has been made is the desire of the child to go to work. The average child has two alternatives—work and school. Few children choose the school. A little questioning of school children will show that most of them—particularly the boys,—detest school and long for work. A similar questioning of working children will show an all

but universal preference for work. The reasons given for this preference are various, but the preference remains the same,—in favor of work and against the school.

What elements in the educational institutions of the country lead to such widespread dislike on the part of the children? This question, put to hundreds of children, is answered in hundreds of different ways. In general, however, the objections have reference to:—(1) the curriculum; (2) the school machinery; (3) the teachers; (4) the discipline.

If, as Spencer maintains, the object of education is complete living, then manifestly the purpose of the school should be to take children from the home at the age of six or seven or eight, and so train them that at the age of fifteen or sixteen or seventeen, they are prepared to take their places in the world, and do it efficiently. The education of the school should have a direct bearing on life and the boy or girl with the most complete education should, therefore, be best prepared to live. Surprising though it may seem, this is not

the case in the United States, because the educational system is not so shaped as to appeal either to the parent or the child.

The boy of twelve who wishes to continue school has no choice. Be his mind square, triangular, or hexagonal, it will be hammered, pushed, and pulled through the same round hole, the school curriculum, which has been worn smooth and polished by the passage of other minds, square, triangular, hexagonal, which were one and all hammered, pushed, and pulled through the identical round school curriculum in the same manner. The boy of twelve who wishes to go to work has an infinite variety of choices before him. Each business holds out a different inducement, appealing to a peculiar temperament. There is no attempt at uniformity. Every opportunity is offered for individual selection.

The boy faces the dilemma presented by the school on the one hand and employment on the other. The school offers monotony, sameness, discipline, and dependence; while employment offers interest, variety, freedom,

and pocket money. In view of these facts, it is small wonder that the boy chooses employment. The choices presented by employment to the girl are not so overwhelmingly attractive, but they are, nevertheless, sufficient, and becoming more so every day, to win multitudes of girls away from the school.

The failure of the school to reach the child is clearly indicated by the astounding degree of illiteracy in the United States. Dr. Andrew S. Draper, New York's Commissioner of Education, says:—

"In Chicago or New York there is a much larger percentage of people ten years old and more who can neither read nor write than there is in London, or Paris, or Berlin, or Zurich, or Copenhagen, or even Tokio. . . . The immigration is an inadequate explanation. There is a larger percentage of illiterate children of native born than of foreign born parents in the state of New York. This statement is also true of Illinois." [1]

The presence of this group of illiterates indicates clearly that the schools are failing to fulfill their allotted sphere in the community; but why? Dr. Draper indicates clearly:—

[1] "Conserving Childhood." By Andrew S. Draper, LL.B., LL.D., Commissioner of Education of the State of New York. Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Conference, National Child Labor Committee, 1909. Pp. 3-4.

"We cannot exculpate the schools. They are as wasteful of child life as are the homes. From bottom to the top of the American educational system we take little account of the time of the child. We are anxious to do everything under the sun, and to put into the head of the young child all that it is expected to know."[1]

The opinion of Dr. Draper is corroborated and confirmed by Dr. Woods Hutchinson, who says:—"This utter lack of appeal of the public school curriculum to the working boy of thirteen or more, is one of *the principal causes of the rush of child labor into the shop and the factory.*"[2]

It is not only the school curriculum that is distasteful.[3] The child is prone to leave school because of three other considerations within the school itself. They will be mentioned rather than discussed. They are:—

[1] *Supra*, p. 9.

[2] "Overworked Children." By Woods Hutchinson, M.D. Proceedings Fifth Annual Conference, National Child Labor Committee, 1909. P. 120.

[3] *American Education.* By Andrew S. Draper. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1909. A justly severe arraignment of the present school system.

1. The incompetent school teachers.
2. The defective school equipment.
3. The repressive school discipline.

Instead of twenty, the ideal number of children in the elementary grades, the large cities of the country show an average of from thirty to forty scholars per teacher. A girl of twenty, graduating from a normal school in June, is not competent in September to take charge of forty pupils and make their work interesting and beneficial, especially when she is handicapped by the inability of the foreign children to understand English. In spite of the patency of this fact, thousands of girls are being yearly hurried through the normal schools, and given charge of large classes of children while they are but children themselves. It does not follow, however, that the girl is at fault. Meager appropriations for educational purposes necessitate large classes and small salaries. Society cannot hope to have the cake and eat it. Competent teachers can be secured only by providing reasonable salaries.

With classes averaging forty small chil-

dren, discipline is essential. If a group of forty children once break from the control of the teacher, all is lost,—Bedlam is the result. In consequence all such teachers, but particularly the younger and less experienced, are laboring under a constant strain. The problem with them is not "How shall I teach?" but, "How shall I maintain discipline?"

This discipline becomes irksome. It is, for the average child, a burden grievous to bear, and, revolting under this burden, the children leave school, preferring the comparative freedom of the factory and the mine.

After a careful study of 666 children who left school in New York City during 1908, Mary Flexner concludes:—"The reasons assigned [for leaving school] show that the children are not in harmony with the present school environment."[1]

Good work is impossible and interest must necessarily flag, in dark, poorly ventilated, and overcrowded classrooms. When the

[1] "A Plea for Vocational Training." By Mary Flexner. *The Survey*, vol. xxii, p. 651.

ideal class for elementary work is twenty, good results cannot be secured, nor even anticipated, in classes containing four times that number.

Another factor which militates against continuance in school is the repressive character of the school discipline. To " sit in order " and " study " are occupations which grow dreadfully monotonous. Bodily energy accumulates, and must be worked off, yet in the average school no provision whatever is made for any kind of exercise that will relieve the feelings. Manual training in some form would answer, but that requires money, and no extra funds are forthcoming.

Thus the school system with its defective curriculum, its imperfect, overworked machinery, its young, inexperienced teachers, and its repressive discipline, forms in the aggregate an ogre from which the child turns to the burden and the soul-destroying monotony of factory work.

Here, then, are two causes, the needy family and the defective school system, which are immediately responsible for child labor. Per-

sonal causes—greed, ignorance, and indifference of manufacturer, parent, and child—are insignificant factors. The causes of child labor are primarily economic and social. If society is not responsible for the inability of parents to provide for the support of their children, it is at least responsible for the support of those children while they are securing an education, and whatever may be said regarding social responsibility for good feeding, society is clearly responsible for not providing an educational system that will hold the children out of the mills.

Briefly the causes of child labor may be thus stated:—The system of modern industry with its labor-saving appliances, its means of employing mechanical power, and its division of labor, makes the manufacture of cheap goods possible; an insatiable public demand for quantity rather than quality leads the manufacturer to turn out many things and cheap ones; in turning out these cheap goods, the manufacturer, through the division of labor and the development of machinery, is enabled to employ children; in a competitive

industry if one manufacturer adopts a cheap device, the others must do likewise or go bankrupt, and thus is created, out of the system of competitive industry, the condition which always permits and at times requires the employment of children. Two other factors enter prominently as causes of child labor. They are the moving causes that are actively operating to send children to work,—

1. The wages of the average workman are so low as to preclude the possibility of his bringing up a family without some outside aid. This is often secured by sending the children to work.
2. The school system with its ancient curriculum, rigorous discipline, and low-paid, inexperienced teachers, is heartily detested by the average boy, and probably by the average girl, who take the first opportunity to escape from its monotony and confinement to the freedom of work.

CHAPTER VI

A PROGRAMME FOR CHILD LABOR REFORM

I. *The Campaign for Negative Legislation*

A VIGOROUS attempt has been made to cope with the child labor problem by organizing a Child Labor Campaign, the object of which may be summed up in one word—Legislation. Philanthropists, social workers, and public-spirited citizens, roused by the tales of child work in mine and factory, have turned eagerly to the American cure-all, negative legislation, and have secured the passage of laws which forbid children under a certain age to work, and which penalize the employer who violates the law.

Such laws are demanded and enacted in the name of the children, but do the children benefit by their existence? Suppose a law to be passed and enforced which results, as

in Illinois, in decreasing the number of children employed from 19,225 in 1902, to 9,925 in 1908.[1] Are the children who were dismissed from work in a more advantageous position than they were before the law was passed? In the majority of cases, they are not.

Child labor laws penalize the employer. The employer dismisses the child. What follows? If the dismissed child dislikes the school, as children who have been at work almost invariably do, he turns to street life. If the family of the dismissed child is in need of his income, he, with the other members of the family, suffers from under-nutrition after that income ceases. In either case, the dismissed child is the loser. While the reformer goes into ecstasies over the statistics of decreasing child labor, the victims of the decrease either run the streets, go hungry, or suffer from both evils.

The statements in the last paragraph are

[1] "The Present Situation in Illinois." By E. T. Davies, Chief Factory Inspector of Illinois. Conference on Child Labor, National Child Labor Committee, 1909. P. 154.

not without foundation. School teachers in industrial districts say very frankly that there is nothing in the schools for the average boy after he has passed the age of twelve. The same teachers will be just as frank in saying that almost never do boys who have once known the freedom of work return to the discipline of school. The same thing is to a lesser degree true of girls. Without question the school fails to retain the interest of the child. On the other hand, an investigation of prices will show that $1.50 a day (the common labor wage) is not a munificent income for a city family of two adults and several children. The distaste for school life; the attractiveness of street life to dismissed children; and the paucity of common labor incomes are real facts that must be faced in solving the problem of the child worker.

The position of the dismissed child is not improved, and may readily be made worse by the enforcement of modern child labor legislation. The attempt to penalize the employer results in penalizing only the child. Anyone familiar with factory reports knows

that, in the words of one inspector, "We can't find them. All we do is to jolly them along." Penalties are seldom imposed on the employer, but the average dismissed child is severely penalized by the dismissal. Thus the attempt to penalize the employer in favor of the child, results in an immediate penalizing of the child.

It is not for a moment contended that there are no working children who, when dismissed by the factory inspector, return to school. Such instances abound in any large industrial center. But in the great majority of instances, the child who is dismissed does not go back to school, but does suffer grievously from the effects of street life, or malnutrition, or else seeks and finds other employment.

The reasons for this shifting of the burdens of the penalty from the employer to the child may be discovered by examining the laws of the various states. The child labor law in most states is a purely negative, coercive instrument. It says, "Thou shalt not," without following this destructive command by a con-

structive "Thou shalt." In that lies its chief defect. The law forbids the child to work, without furnishing any adequate substitute for the work. It deprives the child of one opportunity, but puts no other in its place.

II. *The Problem in Brief*

Briefly summarized, the facts are these: The manufacturer does not need the child. The work of the children can be done with equal if not greater cheapness and efficiency by mechanical devices or by adults. The child does need a school training that will fit him to participate efficiently in some form of life activity. A great number of parents need the earnings of their children. They would not starve to death without them, but they would be deprived of a part of the food and shelter necessary to maintain bodily vigor. Society needs the child, developed eventually into an efficient worker, a good citizen, and a thinking, social being.

How can this desired end be attained? What steps are necessary,—

1. To insure proper training of children for life and work.
2. To give to society thinking, efficient, social men and women.
3. To keep families above the line of malnutrition.
4. To prevent the premature employment of children.

Such results can be attained only by paths radically different from any thus far followed by child labor reformers. In the first place, the school must be made attractive, and the school work must interest the child. In the words of an educational leader, "I look to see the time when our schools will offer as many and as different choices to the children, as the world of business does today."

Incompetent teachers, defective equipment, and repressive discipline drive the children from the schools. Commissioner Andrew S. Draper of New York State says,—"I confess that it startles me to find that certainly not more than two-fifths and undoubtedly not more than a third of the children who enter

our elementary schools ever finish them, and that not more than one-half of them go beyond the fifth or sixth grade." This statement is corroborated by the following sentence from Professor Edward I. Thorndike of Teachers College, Columbia University:—"At least twenty-five out of one hundred children of the white population of our country who enter school stay only long enough to learn to read simple English, write such words as they commonly use, and perform the four operations for integers without serious errors."[1]

The children of America are not in the schools because the schools fail to prepare for life work. They do not assist in complete living, but train their pupils to follow one narrow intellectual path. The parents feel, and justly, that for many children, the school years are well-nigh wasted. The children resent the discipline, despise the curriculum, and eagerly avail themselves of the first opportunity to work.

[1] *Laggards in Our Schools.* By Leonard P. Ayers. New York: Chautris Publishing Committee, 1909. P. 9.

The school training which should count for so much in the development of an efficient citizenship fails to fulfill its function, and its failure is manifest in the hundreds of thousands of children who gladly leave school before reaching the eighth year, and in the millions of ineffective and ruined lives which might have been strong and virile had the proper training been provided in the schools. This school problem can be solved by increased public interest and increased appropriations. Several American cities have extensive elementary courses in manual training designed to interest and instruct the child in hand work. Germany is a generation in advance of the United States in the provision of applied education. The way is plain: the will alone is lacking.

Is the problem equally simple when one faces the family kept above the line of malnutrition by the earnings of child workers? What steps can be taken to maintain the family at an adequate standard of living, and yet place before the children an opportunity for education?

Should the family be assisted? How can it be assisted?

The United States is facing this problem, one of the most difficult of modern questions —the question of the relation of the government to the individual; and the extent to which the individual should depend on the government for support. Every state in the Union has broken through the tradition pale of non-interference with individual activity, by enacting a law forbidding children to work before reaching a certain age, and commanding them to attend school until that age is reached. These laws virtually deprive the family of anticipated income by forbidding work for wages, and by taking children away from the home, thus depriving the parents of their help in the home during school hours.

The government deliberately deprives the family of potential income. Must it not, in justice, make some restitution in the numerous cases where family income is insufficient to meet family needs? If it is socially advantageous that every child should be thoroughly educated, it would seem socially just that the

government make some return to the needy family of such a child while education is being supplied.

This problem has been extensively dealt with abroad, where three methods have been devised which, directly or indirectly, assist in the maintenance of family standards.

1. The minimum wage.
2. Compulsory insurance.
3. School feeding.

The efforts to establish a minimum wage are best exemplified in the legislation of New South Wales (Australia), and of New Zealand. The laws originated in the attempts of the government to maintain the workers and their families in the face of a sweat-shop competition which was being aggravated by immigration.

The employer or the employees in any industry might, under the law, call upon the authorities for the appointment of a minimum wage board, whereupon the local court appointed such a board, consisting of employers, employees, and third parties.

The board held public sessions, took testi-

mony, and determined a fair minimum wage for that particular trade, and after the decision of the board was made and published it became unlawful to pay wages below the rate fixed by the board for the trade in question. This decision of a quasi-public board at once had the force of law and was upheld by the courts. On the whole, the boards have met with a very fair degree of success. One of the most surprising facts in connection with the operation of the law is that in a number of cases boards have been asked for by employers as a protection against sweat-shop competition.

While the boards are far from affording a complete solution for all economic ills, they, nevertheless, have resulted in raising the standard of life and wages in many of the lowest standard trades, and in providing for workmen a minimum standard of economic decency in the form of a minimum wage.[1]

[1] *Labor Movement in Australia.* By Victor J. Clark. New York: Holt & Co., 1906. Chap. vii, Minimum Wage Boards.

The second form of protection for low standard families, compulsory insurance, has been most completely developed in Germany. Here, for a generation, all workers whose income was less than a specified amount, have had to insure against sickness, accident, and death. This compulsory insurance forms a part of the extensive programme of social legislation which Germany has promulgated for the protection of her industrial workers.

The insurance funds are maintained in part by the workers, in part by the employers, and in part by the government. Under the compulsory provisions of the law no man can by his incapacity or death plunge his family into poverty or throw them upon the community for support. Insurance is provided for the protection of those dependent upon him, just as fire departments and public schools are provided for protection and assistance in completer living. The health and physical well-being of children in Germany are thus considered in no way less important than their protection or education.

The promulgation of such a system over so

vast a territory as the German Empire naturally resulted in some dissatisfaction and hardship. Although the compulsory insurance was administered through existing private associations under government supervision, there were many unforeseen details and unlooked-for hindrances. The law as it at present exists has been several times amended, but its important provisions remain intact, and the compulsory insurance system of Germany stands as a monument to the wisdom and far-seeing statesmanship of the German legislators who, with Bismarck, were responsible for their preparation.[1]

School feeding, the third form of protection for needy families, has passed the experimental stage, and is extensively practiced in all of the civilized countries of Europe. The method of feeding varies from city to city, but the principle is the same as that so widely held in Paris,—"The children must be fed." This reply, made to every argument, is an insistence upon the principle that edu-

[1] *State Insurance.* By Frank W. Lewis. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1909. Chap. iv.

cation without bread is as useless as education without life.

The school-feeding system usually requires those who eat the school lunches to pay for them if they are able. If they are unable to pay the meals are given free and an investigation is made into the conditions surrounding the home.

A general act in England, "the Provision of Meals Act," empowers local school authorities to establish systems of school feeding and to pay for the meals by levying a specified percentage on the annual valuation of local property.

Under this act, Bradford has adopted a system of feeding its children. As an experiment forty children were fed during the summer of 1907. "The improvement [in the general appearance and carriage of the child] was more or less apparent in all, and very obvious in some of the children who visibly filled out and brightened up." "The reverse process was equally apparent when the children were seen after the summer holiday, during which no special meals had been pro-

vided." The advantages of this experimental feeding were so manifest that a central kitchen was established and a regular system of feeding instituted.

The experience of Bradford has been duplicated in other towns where school feeding has been attempted. The children fill out, freshen up, and do better work on one square meal a day.

The provision of meals is an extremely temporary remedy. It puts off from day to day the hardships which the children see before them during the summer holidays. It is, however, of sufficient weight to make education possible for indigent children.

To these three methods for improving the conditions of indigent children may be added a fourth, which has been proposed on several occasions by American thinkers. Following this method, all children must attend school up to a certain age,—for example, fourteen years,—but at the point where the child has wage-earning power, perhaps ten years on the farm and twelve years in the city, the public authorities shall pay to the parents of such

children who attend school a weekly wage equivalent to that which the child might earn in the factory, provided that the parents shall first demonstrate to the satisfaction of the authorities that a minimum standard of efficient living cannot be maintained by the family without this support.

The plan has obvious disadvantages. The difficulties of accurately determining a minimum standard of efficiency are very great, as conditions vary with the individual and the community. A system might be started whereby parents could live from the school earnings of a numerous family. These and other objections will present themselves to those familiar with poor law enactment and enforcement.

On the other hand, under existing conditions, thousands of families are deprived of some of the necessaries of life when they are deprived of their children's earnings. Compulsory school attendance, while of unquestionable public benefit, works serious hardship upon many an individual family.

The knowledge so far secured would incline

the student to reject this fourth proposal, and to insist that a combination of the three foreign methods of dealing with the problem would be most effective in the United States.

The first step in the consummation of such a programme is to secure and maintain a wage which will provide a minimum of subsistence. The enforcement of such a wage would be particularly advantageous in sweated industries which do not afford an opportunity for the workers to combine and make effective their demands. The form of the law and the method of its enforcement might well be governed by Australasian experience.

In the second place, some system of compulsory insurance should be adopted which would guarantee the family against unforeseen contingencies such as sickness, accident, and death, all of which prove so disastrous to necessitous families. In the enactment and enforcement of such a law we might well be governed by German experience.

In the third place a school lunch should be provided and served at cost to those who

manner indicated, that any permanent good can be done by the modern child labor legislation which merely forces children out of the factories.

THE END